
Serving the El Sobrante Business Community Since 1957



About Town

The El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce Monthly Newsletter

APRIL 2021

President's Message

Happy Spring! I hope all of your friends and neighbors are well. COVID is down in Contra Costa County, and vaccinations are up. See Contra Costa County pandemic data at <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/overview>. We must keep up our safe actions. Wear your mask over your nose and mouth, and keep 6 feet apart. Soon we will be back to a more normal life if we can remember what that is. Looking forward to more businesses opening up! Stay well!

Mark Croda, President
El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce

2021 Chamber of Commerce Officers & Directors

President: Mark Croda, Owner, Master Mechanic, Restoration Auto Body
Vice-President: Tom Lang, Resident, ESMAC Board
Treasurer: Su Li, Lynden & Company
Secretary: Beverly Wallace, Resident

Directors:

Karla Amador, Diaz, Little Wishes Spa
Marie Carayanis, Membership Chair
Jim Cowen, Farmers Insurance
Bob Davis, Castle Rock Wealth
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Nicole Donn, US Financial Mortgage
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Susan McCloskey, Resident
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Martha Booz, Newsletter Editor and Website Manager

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2021 CHAMBER BOARD MEETINGS—By ZOOM

Board meetings are usually held on the first Monday of every month at 5:15 pm. **We are meeting by Zoom during the pandemic.** All are welcome to attend by Zoom. Contact the Editor at mlbooz@calnatives.com to receive information on how to attend Zoom meetings. The 2021 meetings are scheduled to be held on the dates below:

January 4	February 1	March 1	April 5
May 3	June 7	July 12	August 2
September 13	October 4	November 1	December 6

MIXER CALENDAR

DATE	LOCATION
MIXERS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	PLEASE STAY SAFE, PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING AND WEAR A FACEMASK WHENEVER YOU LEAVE YOUR HOME



MEALS on WHEELS

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CHAMBER STILL HOSTING BUSINESS VIDEOS FOR FREE

In an effort to support our business community, the El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce is offering to host videos promoting your place of business. We are asking that you shoot a quick video, using your cell phone camera or a video camera, which describes your business and what you offer. We ask that this video be approximately one minute long, and follow the guidelines provided below. There are six different business videos which we are now hosting on the Chamber website (scroll down): <https://www.elsobrantechamber.com/>

Please feel free to send your video to my email address below and we will get your video online as soon as possible. If you have any questions, or would like some help with your video, please let me know by calling my cell number below.

Thomas Lang

Chair, El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Committee

Co-Chair, El Sobrante Stroll Committee, El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce

email: tlangesmac.cc@gmail.com

mobile: 510-364-5131

Guidelines for making videos from your phone:

- Landscape mode, not portrait (hold the phone or camera sideways)
- Have a product, logo or storefront in the shot
- Make sure there isn't a lot of noise in the background
- The light should be coming from in front to illuminate the face of the presenter
- The camera/cameraperson shouldn't be directly in front, which can cause a shadow on the presenter

Suggested Script:

Hi, I am <name>, and I am <title such as owner or manager> of <restaurant>. We want to let you all know that we're still available through pick-up and delivery. Feel free to call in your order at <phone number> for pickup or use a delivery service <ubereats/doordash/grubhub, whichever you work with> to have your order delivered. We specialize in <fill in type of food> cuisine. We hope you're all safe and doing well, and we can't wait to see you in our restaurant when this is over. If you have any questions, you can call us at our phone number <xxx-xxx-xxxx>. We are practicing all safety protocols to protect our customers and staff, including masks, gloves, and distancing.



SECURITY PUBLIC STORAGE

Enrique Serrano
Onsite Manager

office 510-222-1893
sanpablo@securitypublicstorage.com

SPAWNERS

Doc Hale on Mountain Lion Ecology
Thursday, April 15 at 7pm
Virtually via Zoom

Join SPAWNERS for our last virtual talk of the season! Doc Hale will speak from his vast personal experience in the area of mountain lion ecology in the East Bay, and showcase photos taken with wildlife cameras. If you'd like to attend Doc Hale's talk, please fill out this simple form with your name and email address, and we will send you the zoom link several days before the event: <https://forms.gle/KhL9YgAKzg1vHM9m9>



Come join us!

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Contact:

Helen Fitanides, Program Coordinator
510-665-3538 helen@thewatershedproject.org



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Beware of COVID-19 Vaccine Scams

How to recognize scams and what to do about it

Unfortunately, we are becoming more aware of vaccine scammers trying to take advantage of vulnerable people during the pandemic. Common scams include fraudulent businesses or people offering to sell COVID-19 vaccines through the internet, emails, phone calls or even home visits. Seniors or older adults are often targeted, with scammers preying on their fear of the virus.

Scams can be avoided! Here are some tips for recognizing scams, and information on how to report them. Please help keep an eye out for anyone you know who is vulnerable and share this information.

- COVID-19 vaccines are free. Be suspicious of anyone selling vaccines or charging for vaccination.
- You can't pay to get on a vaccine list or to get early access. These offers are scams.
- To get vaccinated, work only with your familiar, trusted medical provider. Do not order or sign-up for a vaccine advertised on a website or from any emails that aren't your familiar provider. Do not give your Medicare number, social security number, credit card or bank account information to anyone offering to help you get a vaccination.
- Medicare will never call you asking for your Medicare or Social Security number.
- Beware of anyone unfamiliar offering you **any other** COVID-19 related treatments, medicines, contact tracing services, hospice care or other services or products. Work only with your familiar trusted medical provider.
- If you are an undocumented resident, beware of anyone calling emailing or reaching out to say they can get you a vaccine for payment. Legitimate vaccines are free for people of any immigration or health insurance status.
- Be wary of organizations calling or emailing you asking for donations for victims of COVID-19, even if they have legitimate sounding names. Check all organizations on [Charity Navigator](#), which has an easy online tool that reviews charities. If you are confused by any offers related to COVID-19, do not take any action! Hang up the phone. Shut the door. Don't answer the email. Reach out to a friend or family member if you feel you need help understanding the communication.

Report scams to the California Senior Medicare Patrol (SM at 1-855-613-7080. Suspicious offers or solicitations should also be reported the Contra Costa District Attorney's Consumer Fraud hotline, by calling (925) 957-8608, or emailing [DA- ReportFraud@contracostada.org](mailto:DA-ReportFraud@contracostada.org)

Click [here](#) for excellent information on vaccine fraud from the California Senior Medicare Patrol, a grant-funded national organization staffed by many volunteers that is taking the lead on fighting COVID-19 scams and the elderly.

COVID-19 VACCINE SCAMS

- » You likely will not need to pay anything out of pocket to get the vaccine during this public health emergency.
- » You cannot pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- » You cannot pay to get early access to the vaccine.
- » No one from Medicare or the Health Department will contact you.
- » No one from a vaccine distribution site or health care payer, like a private insurance company, will call you asking for your Social Security number or your credit card or bank account information to sign you up to get the vaccine.

Check with your health care provider before paying for or receiving any COVID-19-related treatment.

**Report fraud:
855-613-7080**



This project was supported, in part, by grant 90MPPG0019-01-00 from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20001.

More information: <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/>

John Gioia, Supervisor, First District, Contra Costa County

BENEFITS OF JOINING THE EL SOBRANTE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1. **El Sobrante Chamber Members get their own page on our website.** This page displays your logo, photos, and text with keywords for Search Engine Optimization (so you are found at the top in Google searches, aka SEO), a map to your location, links to your website and social media, and videos.
2. **Members are promoted on our social media accounts.** We will post about your sales, events, services, and anything else you would like us to promote.
3. **Members are promoted through our print and digital newsletters** that are sent out once a month.
4. **Members have monthly opportunities** to meet other community members and business leaders at our popular mixers, which resume after the pandemic is over.

5. **Members receive a generous welcome package** with gifts and coupons from other Chamber Members.
6. **The El Sobrante Chamber provides an abundance of resources** about our local community.
7. **Members are offered discounted booth spaces at our annual El Sobrante Stroll**, which is attended by approximately 25,000 people per year. The Stroll will also resume next year.
8. **The El Sobrante Chamber offers multiple workshops per year**, in which experts discuss topics that are helpful to business owners and their employees. Upcoming workshops include presentations on SEO, taxes, insurance, social media marketing, and more.
9. **Members often receive special discounts** from other Members' businesses.
10. **Current members in good standing receive a \$10 credit** towards future dues for each new member they refer who joins the Chamber.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chamber is offering a 50% discount to businesses who have been economically affected by the pandemic. Our Membership Application is included in this issue for your convenience on page 9, just below.

The Chamber, as a business, understands the financial impact of the pandemic on our local businesses and community, and we are encouraging all businesses to join in supporting each other. Your membership will keep all of us viable during 2021. We thank all members who have renewed their membership this year.

Since all of our scheduled meetings, mixers and community events have been postponed, due to the pandemic, and until it is safe to gather, we invite you to visit our Chamber website at www.elsobrantechamber.com. We are holding Zoom Board meetings on the first Monday of each month and if you would like to join us, please contact our Editor, Martha Booz, at mlbooz@calnatives.com. She will forward you the Zoom link.

Our MASKS MATTER PROJECT has distributed hundreds of free face masks and the project is ongoing. Masks are available at the El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way. A special Thank You to Eleanor Nelson, a vendor from our Annual Hometown Holiday Faire, for making and donating these one-of-a kind face masks.



El Sobrante
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Business Name _____ Date _____

Representative _____

Resident's Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email Address _____ Cell _____

New- Referred by _____

Renewal- year first joined _____

Do you wish to appear on published mailing lists? yes no

Would you like to serve on a committee? yes no

MEMBERSHIP DUES

ADVERTISING FEES

[Membership period February 1 through January 31 of following year, prorated only after August 31]

Paid annually as follows:

- Business \$150
- [over 10 employees] \$200
- In-Home Business \$100
- Non-Profit Organization \$100
- Resident \$ 40

- Newsletter
- Full Page – per issue \$100
 - full year \$600*
 - Half Page - full year \$350*
 - Qtr. Page - full year \$200*
 - Business card, full year \$100

MEMBERSHIP DUES \$ _____

Pandemic Relief Disc 50% \$ - _____

ADVERTISING FEES \$ _____

DONATIONS:

Beautification \$ _____

Scholarship \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Complimentary website AD included for 2021

ADVERTISING ART:

- INCLUDED WITHIN
- TO BE SENT SEPARATELY
- USE PREVIOUS ART

JOIN/RENEW online at elsobrantechamber.com

or

COMPLETE FORM and RETURN WITH CHECK TO:

EI Sobrante Chamber of Commerce

4460 Fieldcrest Dr.

EI Sobrante, CA 94803

ATTN: Membership

MORTGAGE MINUTE

We have been promising a Down Payment Assistance (DPA) webinar for months and once again, it has to be put off. While we have great DPA programs, currently rates are starting to climb and the refinance opportunities may dry up soon. I wouldn't want anyone who can benefit to miss out. If your mortgage rate is over 4% or you have other debts that you would like to consolidate or have home improvements that you would like to make, now is an opportune time to see if refinancing would improve your financial situation.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have announced they will only allow 7% of the loans they buy to be second (vacation) homes or investment (rental) properties and we have seen the cost of getting those loans double in the past month. The rates are still only about 1/2 % higher than an owner-occupied loan, but the points are at least twice what you would pay for an owner-occupied loan.

Our philosophy is to put ourselves in your financial shoes and recommend what we would recommend to ourselves if we were in your situation. Your mortgage can possibly change your financial life. If you own more than one property, you may have enough equity in one to refinance and end up owning one or more of the properties free and clear. If you have additional debt, you may be able to consolidate and have your monthly payments go way down or pay off your house 10 or 15 years sooner. Now is an exciting time in the mortgage business because we can really help people improve their finances as values are high and rates are low.

Nicole Donn

Branch Manager
NMLS#246511



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Friends of the El Sobrante Library

Saturday, May 8, 10 am – 2 pm

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In the plaza behind the library, 4191 Appian Way

Tom's Jams and Jellies on sale!

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Social Distancing protocol to be observed



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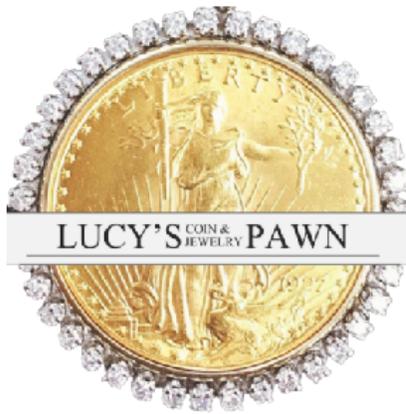
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Boys & Girls Clubs of Contra Costa, Serving El Sobrante, Pinole, San Pablo & Martinez
Nicole Donn, US Financial Mortgage Lending

The Guide is available on our web site, the Chamber office and at many businesses.
<https://www.elsobrantechamber.com/resources/business-directory/>

The May issue of ABOUT TOWN will be published on May 1, 2021.
Ads or articles must be submitted not later than 5:30pm on Thursday, April 25, 2021 to guarantee inclusion in the publication. Written pieces must be sent in WORD format, art should be a JPEG or GIF file. Send your submissions for consideration to mlbooz@calnatives.com
The newsletter's editorial committee has final determination on all newsletter content.



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El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce Members

Business Name	Contact	Business Name	Contact
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit	Ryan Lau	**Republic Services**	Bielle Moore
Alpha Tax Service	John G. Kelso EA	Restoration Auto Body	Mark Croda
Porter, Ritchie & Associates Ameriprise Financial Services	Mark Porter	Richard Smith Allstate Insurance	Richard Smith
Bill's Underground	Bill & Donna Schupp	**Rotary Club of El Sobrante**	Ruth Williams Rockey
Boys & Girls Clubs of Contra Costa	Lorna Padia Markus	**Security Public Storage**	Melissa & Enrique Serrano
Burgess-Allard Group LLC	Karlen Allard- Schminke	**SPAWNERS**	Judy Ward
Canyon Swim School—Closed for 2020	Fred Brown	State Farm Insurance	Sonny Randhawa
Castle Rock Wealth Management	Bob Davis	**Sewer Connection**	Cathy Brazil
Cloverfield Organic Farm	Susan Abernathy	Sinclair Financial	Lindy Sinclair
Educational Services Plus	Shirley Rosenthal Winston	The Noodle House	Miguel Gallegos
East Bay Municipal Utility District	Sharla Sullivan	The Pedaler Bike Shop	Jeff Jerge
Eastgate Petroleum	Nacho Aguilar	**US Financial Mortgage**	Nicole Donn
El Sobrante Historical Society	Don Bastin	**Vegan 'N Chicken**	Shabaz Abbasi
El Sobrante Wheel and Brake	Lyle Miller	Wadsworth Glass	Veronica Jerge
Farmers Insurance Agency	Jim Cowen	Waldorf Realty	Kamal Randhawa
Fisk Termite Control, Inc.	Robert Sibley	West Contra Costa Meals on Wheels	Rod Chiuu, Denise Quiros
Godfathers Limousine Service	Tony Raffanelli	West County Wastewater District	B Martinez
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Little Wishes Spa	Karla Amador-Daza	Resident	Y'Anad Burrell
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Lynden & Company	Thomas Lynden	Resident	Sarah Dunham
Mauri Concrete Construction Co., Inc	Christina Mauri	Resident	John S. Koepke
MCE Clean Energy	Sandra Zelaya, Kalicia Pivrotto	Resident	Thomas Lang
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Michael Pejza Insurance	Michael Pejza	Residents	Susan & Dick McCloskey
Moose Lodge	Larry Jordan	Resident	Lillian Nardi
Nerd Crossing	Jim Hammack	Resident	Lorna Padia Markus
Oliver's Hardware	Richard Oliver	Resident	Shirley Sharp
Planchon Roofing	Doug Planchon	Resident	Bob Sharp
Plumbing Express	Cathy Brazil	Resident	Beverly Wallace
Premier Designs Jewelry	Dawn Biocca	Resident	Debbie Wold
Rancho Saloon	Scott McFadin		

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Please see 2021 membership application in this issue on page 12.

El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce
About Town Newsletter
April 2021



THE EL SOBRANTE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

www.ElSobranteChamber.com

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