

Serving the El Sobrante Business Community Since 1957



About Town

The El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce Monthly Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2021

EL Sobrante Chamber of Commerce presents:



PASSPORT



Explore El Sobrante With Your Passport

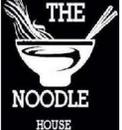
Support El Sobrante businesses while earning the chance to win valuable prizes. Take part in the Explore El Sobrante Sweepstakes, starting September 1, and lasting through September 30th.

Participation is very simple: Go to any of the businesses displaying the Explore El Sobrante Poster and get your Explore El Sobrante Passport. Be sure to completely fill out your contact information on the Passport, so we can notify you if you win. See below for a graphic of participating businesses with their logos.

Each business has a unique stamp. When you make a transaction at any one of these businesses, such as a purchase or consultation, get your passport stamped with the establishment's unique stamp.

During the month of September, complete 10 or more visits to compete for prizes in the Explore El Sobrante Sweepstakes. Drop your completed Passport (10 or more stamps) in the Explore El Sobrante collection box at any of our businesses.

Winners will be announced in early October.

						
E.S. Town Garage	U.S. Financial Mortgage	Maria's Pastries	Mechanic's Bank	Jim Cowen Farmers	The Noodle House	NERD CROSSING
						
The Pedaler	California Thai	Klean N Brite Cleaner	Pool Doctor	Neighbor's Donuts	E. S. Wheel & Brake	Sonny Randhawa Insurance
						
Vegan N' Chicken	Wadsworth Glass	Pro Wheels	APN Smoke Shop	Olivers Hardware	Plumbing Express	Sam's Doghouse
						
Sewer Connection	Central Foods	El Sobrante Feed	Kaliente Restaurant	E.S. Smog & Auto Repair	Rancho Saloon	El Trompudo
						
Fancy Paws	Paramba Fashion	Los Cerros Mexican	Bob's Barber Shop	Windermere Real Estate	Chicago Pizza w/Twist	Hair Fashions

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

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Marie Carayanis, Membership Chair

Jim Cowen, Farmers Insurance

Bob Davis, Castle Rock Wealth

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Nicole Donn, US Financial Mortgage

Lending

Susan McCloskey, Resident

Sonny Randhawa, State Farm

Insurance Agent

Bob Sharp, Resident

Scott Tuffnell, Windermere Rowland

Realty

Judy Ward, SPAWNERS

Martha Booz, Newsletter Editor

2021 CHAMBER BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are usually held on the first Monday of every month at 5:15 pm. **We are meeting in the Chamber office now, at 3769 San Pablo Dam Road in El Sobrante.** 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

Sponsors of El Sobrante Business Guide

The following businesses supported our Guide to Shopping, Dining and Service in El Sobrante:

Dr. Dan Rixen, D.C., D.A.A.P.M. Rixen Chiropractic

Jim Cowen, Farmers Insurance

Mark Anthony Porter, CRPC, Ameriprise Financial

Bob Davis, Castle Rock Wealth Management

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/>

Help Us Make El Sobrante Sparkle On September 18th

By Chris Conrad, El Sobrante Green Team Volunteer

People love El Sobrante for its quiet neighborhoods, its natural beauty and its non-imposing downtown area. In “normal” times, it has a small-town feel, where people explore the hillside trails, get to know their neighbors and drop in on the small businesses that share in our sense of community and the 94803 zip code.

Our town is a mash up – a patchwork of Richmond and unincorporated Contra Costa County jurisdictions tossed together like a salad. But those of us who live and work here crave that sense of community that comes with small, attentive shopkeepers and clean streets.

Given the pandemic, these are not normal times. People are nervous about getting out and the trash blowing along our roads can make it feel like a ghost town, with cars rushing through, on their way to someplace else.

Chamber, Library and neighbors are pitching in Sept. 18th

National Cleanup Day, Saturday, September 18, gives us a chance to restore that sense of neighborhood pride and community spirit. Residents, students and local institutions are all pitching in from 10 am to 2 pm that day, to make our town sparkle and give us a “clean slate” for keeping El Sobrante clean and beautiful. The goal of this event, and moving forward, is simple. Clean up around our properties or homes. Pick up litter on nearby streets and “hot spots” that gather lots of trash. Provide adequate trash bins to handle the garbage created by businesses, customers, tenants, etc. Let others know that throwing trash on the ground is not acceptable, so don’t litter in the first place.

The El Sobrante Public Library is doing its part by hosting our local clean up event, with on-site registration and equipment check out, beginning Saturday at 10 AM, as well as a participant appreciation event with music and information tables from 2 to 4 PM, at the end of the day’s work. Trash bags and gloves will be provided, and grabbers will be loaned, as needed. Signs will greet people at the edges of town with an invitation to connect with us through our website, KeepElSobranteClean.info, and to help out.

It’s exciting to see how much support there is for sprucing up our little town. The Chamber of Commerce has chipped in (thanks, CofC!), supporting the El Sobrante Green Team by funding some equipment. Individuals and businesses are chipping in with a few dollars or in-kind donations, to help make the event a success, and by adding people-power to the cleanup.

Businesses help instill civic pride – and gain happy customers

By now, you're probably wondering, either "how can I get involved" or "what's in it for me?" Of course, we all benefit from a cleaner environment, but the benefits you take away from this civic outreach activity will depend on how much you bring to it. Many businesses here are small, and nobody expects you to break the bank.

Here are three things you can do at minimal costs for maximum benefits:

- Let your customers and staff know about our local National Cleanup Day event. We have window signs for people to see, as well as flyers to take to boost interest and participation. Maybe you can keep a permanent sign up, reminding people not to litter.
- Look after your own property first. If you hire a crew to clean up your location, ask them to expand their area beyond the parking lots, down to the nearby sidewalks, surrounding vegetation and streets, where litter accumulates. If you don't have a crew, spend the slower parts of the business day outside picking up litter, sweep the sidewalk, or freshen up the landscaping. If you put out adequate trash receptacles chain them securely to your building so they aren't swiped. Even better, work your way up the street a hundred feet past your property line, cleaning around the parking lot and back of the property. Reach out to neighbors and prospective businesses.
- Help sponsor this event and other cleanup activities year-round. We are volunteers, working on the cheap, so even a small donation of cash or supplies will go a long way. Maybe you can assign the tasks of cleaning up litter and emptying trash cans to a staff member to avoid the buildup of litter and debris along our roadways and sidewalks. When people see you out in the streets and actively engaged with the community, they feel closer to you, see you as investing in the neighborhood and want to be your customers, knowing that your business cares about our community.

Here's how you can get involved

The first thing to do is explore our website, KeepElSobranteBeautiful.info, to see the resources and plans we already have going. Maybe you can form a team for September 18 but, if not, sign up as an individual and encourage your employees to do likewise.

If you would like to donate money, in-kind items or something we can use to show appreciation to our participants, like beverages, snack bars or prizes – that would be great.

To give us suggestions or find out what other resources we have available, call either Mikki Norris (El Sobrante MAC) at 510-685-8163 or Holly Trejo at 510-685-6268, or send an email to info@KeepElSobranteBeautiful.info. We'll get back with you ASAP.

Most importantly, make keeping our town clean and litter-free a year-long commitment by assigning an employee to oversee the property and make sure trash cans are emptied regularly and in a timely manner.

Nobody expects one day to permanently solve our local trash problem, but one day can be the starting point for the community to make personal connections, show pride in our township and take an active role in making El Sobrante shine with the beauty that makes it so special.

Can you make that happen? It will take a little bit of work from each of us – but we can have a big effect on how we feel about our hometown and how passersby feel about us.

Keep El Sobrante Clean & Beautiful



National Cleanup Day

Saturday, September 18, 2021

All El Sobrante / Richmond residents
are invited to join in our
94803 community-wide cleanup

Let's KeepElSobranteBeautiful.info

*Join or form a team with your friends
and neighbors, your street, business,
school, organization, place of worship,
etc. to clean up litter/trash around your
property, block or nearby trouble spots*

Want to know more?
Contact us: info@KeepElSobranteBeautiful.info
and visit us at

KeepElSobranteBeautiful.info

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 seven different business videos which we are now hosting on the Chamber website home page (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 for restaurant owners:

Use this script for your business and modify it as needed.

Hi, I am <name>, and I am <title such as owner or manager> of <restaurant or business>. 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.

El Sobrante Area Neighbors:

SPAWNERS



Protect your local creek!

- Volunteer Work Parties
- Nature Walks & Talks
- Educational Programs

Contact:
Lauren Iverson, Program Coordinator
(510) 665-3538
lauren.iverson@thewatershedproject.org

Join SPAWNERS for a volunteer workday on Saturday, 9/18. Meet us at the Wilkie Creek restoration site (next to 4805 Santa Rita Road, Richmond) at 9:30 am. Water and snacks will be provided.

SPAWNERS also has two exciting public events happening this month! On 9/12, the Coastal Conservancy's Marilyn Latta will be leading us on a nature walk around the Giant Marsh Project at Point Pinole Regional Shoreline. We'll meet in the 5551 Giant Hwy, Richmond parking lot at 9:30 am. Lastly, on 9/28, join us for a talk with the folks involved with the North Richmond Horizontal Levee & Shoreline Public Access project. The talk will be held at the El Sobrante Library (4191 Appian Way) and begin at 7 pm. Please email watershed coordinator Lauren Iverson for more information: lauren.iverson@thewatershedproject.org.

C4AGES (Citizens for a Greener El Sobrante)

C4AGES and Citizens for Greener Communities (GRECO) have completed the Prop 68 grant application, along with the County, for funding to buy land for a downtown park.

Our State-assigned officer requested a site tour of the property in mid-July, which was also attended by Supervisor John Gioia, Realtor Tom Cazazza, Soheila Bana and Sharon Korotkin.

All applications are now in the lengthy review process and award announcements will be made sometime in September.

Keep your fingers crossed for us!



Mortgage Minute by Nicole Donn US Financial Mortgage Lending

The topic of this month's mortgage minute is the GSFA (Golden State Finance Authority) Platinum and Platinum Select Programs GSFA is a local housing finance authority that has supported affordable homeownership in California for over two decades, providing homeownership programs featuring competitive interest rates and down payment assistance.

- The Platinum program offers Financial assistance up to 5%, to use for down payment and/or closing costs.
- Homebuyer doesn't have to be a first-time homebuyer to qualify.
- Flexible income limits (low-to-moderate income).
- Various first mortgage loan types available to fit the needs of the homebuyer (FHA, VA, USDA and Conventional financing)

For many homebuyers, the assistance is provided as a zero percent Second Mortgage. The Second Mortgage is at 0% interest, has no monthly payments and is completely forgiven after three (3) years from the close of escrow.

For Platinum "Select" qualifying homebuyers, the assistance is provided as a gift that never has to be repaid from day one. Platinum Select are people who work in a variety of public safety and education occupations. Contact Nicole for the complete list.

The maximum loan amount is \$548,250 or the maximum county limit, whichever is lower. Property being purchased must be used as a primary residence, and minimum credit score is 640.

If you or anyone you know wants to get preapproved for this loan program, please contact Nicole Donn at US Financial ndonn@gemcorp.com 510-758-3035 and she or one of the licensed loan originators at US Financial will get you preapproved.



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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 will 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. A decision on the 2021 Stroll will take place at the June Chamber Board meeting. The 2021 Stroll, if it takes place, will be virtual.
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. More information on any 2021 Workshops will be announced later.
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.

Hometown Holiday Faire

Saturday, November 27, 2021



Free Admission

10:00am to 3:00pm

Masonic Hall
5050 El Portal Drive, El Sobrante

Unique Holiday Gifts For Sale, Crafted by Local Artisans & Merchants
Holiday Music in an Old Fashioned Holiday Setting

Light Catered Lunch Available / \$8.00 Donation
Fresh Baked Goods & Beverages

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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:

**El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce
4460 Fieldcrest Dr.
El Sobrante, CA 94803
ATTN: Membership**

EL SOBRANTE MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (ESMAC)

Want to hear about what is going on in El Sobrante and provide input to County government on issues which you're concerned about? On the second Wednesday of each month, at 7PM, you are invited to join the meeting of the El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council (ESMAC).

Meetings typically involve presentations by local law enforcement (Sheriff's office and Highway Patrol), the County Fire Protection District, and Supervisor John Gioia's office. There are always presentations on topics of interest to the whole community. At recent meetings of the ESMAC, among other topics, we discussed:

- Proposals for a park at the old Mowery Arco Station on San Pablo Dam Road
- The Envision Contra Costa 2040 project
- Wildfire protection plans in the El Sobrante Valley
- The proposed Artist Tree marijuana dispensary on San Pablo Dam Rd at La Colina
- County updates on the COVID-19 pandemic.

At every ESMAC meeting, members of the audience are encouraged to ask questions. There is always an Open Agenda section, where people can raise issues they are concerned about, and get input from Supervisor Gioia's office as well as other members of the community. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings are held online via Zoom Link. Check the ESMAC website for the meeting agenda. If you click on the agenda, you will find the zoom link.

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/1640/El-Sobrante-Municipal-Advisory-Council>

If you have questions about the ESMAC, feel free to contact ESMAC Chair Thomas Lang, at TLangESMAC.CC@gmail.com



Go to scottTuffnell.withwre.com to learn more

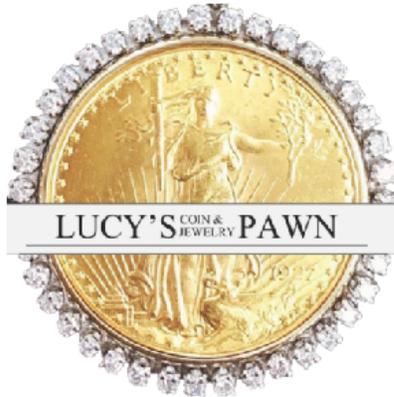
Scott Tuffnell, Realtor®. SRS, SRES

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The October issue of ABOUT TOWN will be published on October 1, 2021.

Ads or articles must be submitted not later than 5:30pm on Wednesday, September 25, 2021, to guarantee inclusion in the publication. Written pieces must be sent in WORD format (no PDFs), art should be a JPEG, GIF or PNG 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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We meet at "Café Soleil" on Tuesdays at 12:15pm.
For more information or to visit a club meeting:
Contact Larry Gebelein at (510) 222-3261



Do You Have A Business Insurance Professional?

You know your business. It relies heavily on your dedication and knowledge. And, your family relies on your business for income.

To protect your family, you need to protect your business.

When a difficult tax issue arises, you consult a tax professional. For a legal issue, you turn to a trusted law professional. It's the same when it comes to insurance.

Having the proper insurance program is critical. Why trust those crucial decisions to chance? You need a Business Insurance Professional. That's where Jim Cowen can help. He is one of West County's leading commercial and business agents. Helping small business owners like you isn't his job; it's his commitment.

Before you renew you owe it to yourself to call Jim. You'll be glad you did.

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- o Auto
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Jim Cowen

5341 Valley View Rd
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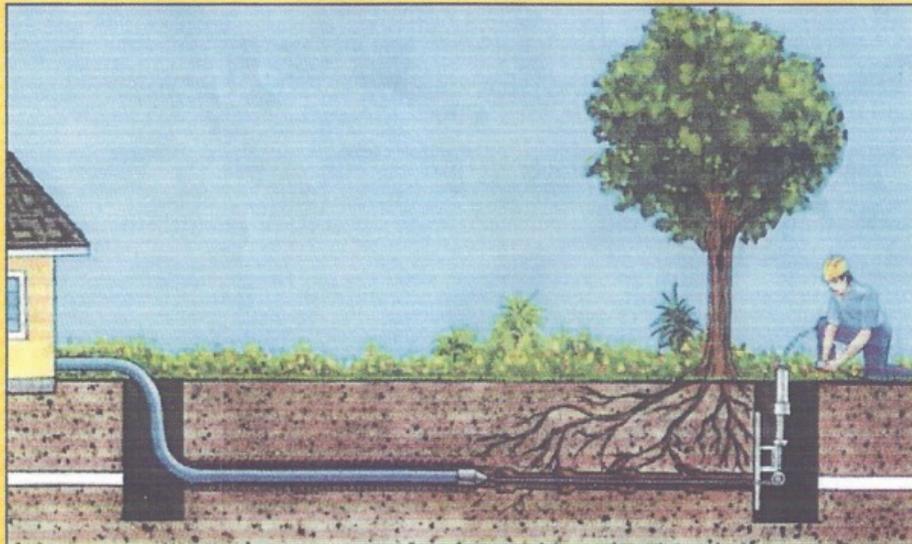
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El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce Members

Business Name	Contact	Business Name	Contact
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit	Ryan Lau	**Rotary Club of El Sobrante**	Ruth Williams Rockey
Alpha Tax Service	John G. Kelso EA	**Security Public Storage**	Melissa & Enrique Serrano
Porter, Ritchie & Associates Ameriprise Financial Services	Mark Porter	**SPAWNERS**	Judy Ward
Bill's Underground	Bill & Donna Schupp	State Farm Insurance	Sonny Randhawa
Boys & Girls Clubs of Contra Costa	Lorna Padia Markus	**Sewer Connection**	Cathy Brazil
Canyon Swim School—Closed for 2020	Fred Brown	Sinclair Financial	Lindy Sinclair
CASA of Contra Costa County	Gordana Zura	**US Financial Mortgage**	Nicole Donn
Castle Rock Wealth Management	Bob Davis	**Vegan 'N Chicken**	Shabaz Abbasi
Cloverfield Organic Farm	Susan Abernathy	Waldorf Realty	Kamal Randhawa
Contra Costa Protective Services	Mr. M. Kahn	The Grooming Garden	Cyndy Patrick
East Bay Municipal Utility District	Sharla Sullivan	West Contra Costa Meals on Wheels	Rod Chiuu, Denise Quiros
El Sobrante Historical Society	Don Bastin	West County Wastewater District	B Martinez
Farmers Insurance Agency	Jim Cowen	**Windermere Rowland Realty**	Scott Tuffnell
Fisk Termite Control, Inc.	Robert Sibley		
Godfathers Limousine Service	Tony Raffanelli	Resident	Martha Booz
Little Wishes Spa	Karla Amador-Daza	Resident	Y'Anad Burrell
Lucy's Coin & Jewelry Pawn	Adam Gross	Residents	Marie & Nick Carayanis
Lynden & Company	Thomas Lynden	Resident	Sarah Dunham
Mechanics Bank	Jury Zamora, mgr.	Resident	John S. Koepke
Michael Pejza Insurance	Michael Pejza	Resident	Thomas Lang
Moose Lodge	Larry Jordan	Resident	Su Li
Nerd Crossing	Jim Hammack	Residents	Susan & Dick McCloskey
Planchon Roofing	Doug Planchon	Resident	Lorna Padia Markus
Plumbing Express	Cathy Brazil	Resident	Shirley Sharp
Premier Designs Jewelry	Dawn Biocca	Resident	Bob Sharp
Republic Services	Bielle Moore	Resident	Beverly Wallace
Restoration Auto Body	Mark Croda	Resident	Debbie Wold

Ad Sponsors

Please see 2021 membership application in this issue on page 10.

El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce
About Town Newsletter
September 2021



THE EL SOBRANTE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

www.ElSobranteChamber.com

3769 – B San Pablo Dam Road

El Sobrante, CA 94803

Office: 510-815-9307