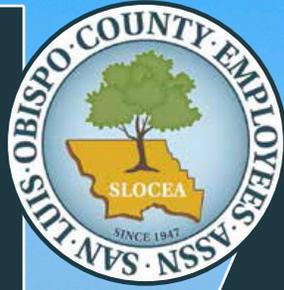


THE COUNTY

BLADE



VOLUME 38, NO. 1

JANUARY 2023

**STAY ALERT TO
CHANGES IN LABOR
LAW THAT AFFECT YOU**



**NEW YEAR,
NEW
BENEFITS**

**DUE
PROCESS
RIGHTS**

**THE
IMPORTANCE OF
INDEPENDENCE**

SLOCEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

— SLOCEA MISSION STATEMENT —

The mission of the San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association is to advocate for fair compensation, safe working conditions, affordable healthcare, and a secure retirement for our members, who provide vital services to the public.

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THE COUNTY BLADE

SLOCEA San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association

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The opinions expressed in **The County Blade** do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the **San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association** unless so specified.

For advertising information, please call Tana Pigeon at 951-686-7575.

The County Blade is published digitally monthly, distributed to the SLOCEA membership through the website, email, and social media.



**HAVE A QUESTION?
CALL SLOCEA
805-543-2021**

Cover Image: Trail heading to the ocean in the Pismo Preserve.
Photo Credit: Wildnerdpix via iStock by Getty Images.

SLOCEA Members: Stay Alert To Changes In Labor Law That Affect You

Marilyn Rossa, *Executive Director*

Every January, changes in law take effect in California. January 2023 will be no different. Below are the meaningful changes that will help workers and unions. Pay particular attention to “Greater Union Protections” below.



PAY TRANSPARENCY

Employers with more than 15 workers will have to include salary and wage ranges in their job postings and provide that information to any employee or applicant who requests it.

“California has the strongest equal pay laws in the nation, but we’re not letting up on our work to ensure all women in our state are paid their due and treated equally in all spheres of life,” Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement after he signed the bill into law.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

Beginning in January, California’s minimum wage will rise to \$15.50.

For businesses with 26 or more employees, there will be a 50-cent increase per hour and \$1.50 an hour for those with 25 or fewer. In the past, minimum wage applied differently to employers, depending on the size of the business. This will be the first time all employers in the state will pay the same minimum wage, regardless of size.

GREATER UNION PROTECTIONS

In the new year, “government employers in California will face financial penalties for deterring or discouraging union activity.” Under SB 931, the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) has the power to fine employers up to \$100,000 if it finds that workers were prevented from participating in a union.

This is of critical importance to SLOCEA members. The law is allowing, through PERB, the imposition of a hefty fine for interfering in the legally protected activities of employees, which include joining a union, contacting the union for help, participating

in union leadership, and more. Please contact SLOCEA if you are experiencing any of the above prohibited activities.

Also, farm workers will be able to vote by mail in union elections starting next year.

“Under AB 2183, authored by Assemblyman Mark Stone, D-Monterey Bay, farm workers can choose to vote at a physical location or mail a representation ballot card to an Agricultural Labor Relations Board office.”

A FIRST-IN-THE-NATION FAST-FOOD COUNCIL

Due to the pressure exerted by fast

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

food workers and their advocates, a groundbreaking law establishing a fast-food regulatory council was scheduled to go into effect on January 1.

AB 257 creates a state-run council to negotiate wages, hours and working conditions for employees. But, because of backing by corporate restaurant chains like In-N-Out and Chipotle, the bill now faces a potential referendum challenge.

Following the announcement of the intended referendum, fast-food worker strikes ensued, along with allegations that petitioners were lying to voters about what the referendum would actually do. No date has been set yet for the referendum vote.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Because of the extension of SB 951, millions of working Californians will have access to greater paid family leave in the new year.

“SB 951 extends, through 2024, temporary increases in benefits from 55% of wages to between 60% and 70% depending on income.

“
Because of the extension of SB 951, millions of working Californians will have access to greater paid family leave in the new year.
”

“Starting in 2025, workers making under \$57,000 will be eligible for the benefits between 70-90% of their pay. All other workers are eligible for benefits between 60-70%.

Governor Newsom has stated that “California created the first Paid Family Leave program in the nation 20 years ago, and today we’re taking an important step to ensure more low-wage workers, many of them women and people of color, can access the time off they’ve earned

while still providing for their family.”

All in all, these changes in the law have created good news for California workers. But, you must be aware of them in the event that your employer is not following the law. Let’s not forget that knowledge is power.

*In Solidarity,
Marilyn*

(Source: *Sacramento Bee*, December 23, 2022, Maya Miller)

Call her! Marilyn Rossa, our new Executive Director, is now available to take your calls about any job concerns.

5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday.

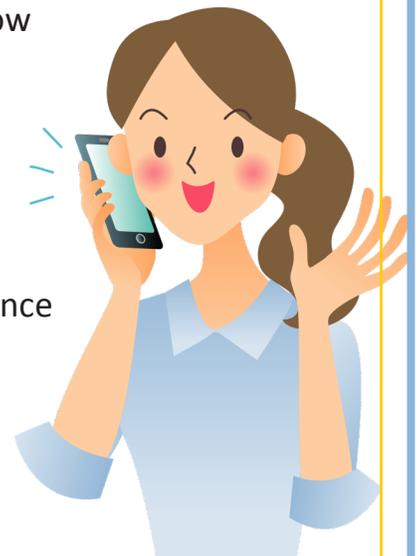
805-242-6318

Call us! The SLOCEA office is now staffed for your convenience

7:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday

8:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m. on Fridays.

805-543-2021



Due Process Rights

Theresa Schultz,
Senior Labor Representative

As a public employee with permanent status, you have property rights to your job and rights to due process in formal disciplinary matters wherein you would suffer monetarily.



According to law, due process must be provided prior to a state or local government terminating, suspending, demoting, or reducing the pay of an employee, who has a vested property interest in his or her job.

Disciplinary actions for state and local employees are addressed in Skelly rights, named after the 1975 California Supreme Court decision

case *Skelly v. State Personnel Board*. The case involved the termination of a government employee who, among other things, was deprived of his right to due process to pre-disciplinary discovery – the “materials upon which the action is based.”

Under due process requirements, employers must serve the employee with an official notice of the proposed formal discipline in the form of a Notice of Intent “NOI”, which must:

- Identify the specific rules, policies or laws that have allegedly been violated by the employee
- Contain the “just cause” factual basis for the discipline
- Be served with all documents that were relied upon in determining the proposed discipline

- Provide a deadline for the Skelly hearing or written response
- Include the effective date of the discipline

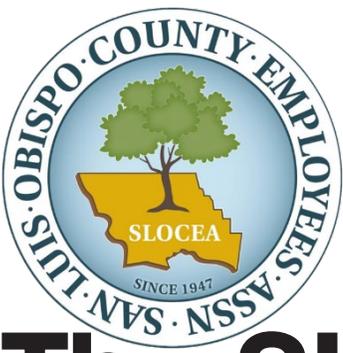
Thereafter, the employee has the right to participate in the Skelly hearing which affords the employee the opportunity to respond to the proposed discipline, refute the allegations, and mitigate the intended level of discipline being proposed. Skelly hearings may be done in person or a written brief addressing the allegations in the NOI may be submitted.

Following a Skelly decision, the employee will be noticed of the Appointing Authority’s findings and decision to uphold, reduce, or set aside the discipline. If the Appointing Authority’s decision is to uphold or reduce the proposed discipline, the employee will be served with a Final Order. Thereafter the employee may file an appeal of the discipline within 10 business days of the Final Order with the intent of pursuing an evidentiary due process hearing.

Sometimes pre-hearing discussions may serve as an opportunity for both sides to reach an amenable settlement arrangement. If not, the case will then be slated for hearing. County employee cases are heard before the Civil Service Commission, while cases for employees of the Superior Court and the Los Osos CSD are heard before a mutually agreed upon arbitrator.

“The employee has the right to participate in the Skelly hearing which affords the employee the opportunity to respond to the proposed discipline, refute the allegations, and mitigate the intended level of discipline being proposed.”

It is imperative that if you find yourself in the situation of being served with a Notice of Intent for a formal disciplinary action, that you immediately consult with a SLOCEA representative.



The SLOCEA Phone App is Here!

The SLOCEA Phone app is now available on the Apple and Google app stores! Scan the QR code below with your smart phone to find it on your device's app store!



You can also find the app on both app stores by searching for "SLOCEA."

For assistance, please contact the SLOCEA office at 805-543-2021



How to Download & Log In

- When logging in and creating a password, be sure to use the email that SLOCEA has on file for you.
- Once you are logged in, use the menu to navigate to the Member Resources page. This action will notify staff to verify your membership.
- Membership verification will be completed by staff in 1-2 business days.

The Importance Of Independence

Brooke Daphne,
Administrative Assistant



In June 1985, SLOCEA found itself in a perilous situation; membership in the organization had been trending downward, finances were tight, and tensions with local unions over disputed territory were high. Weighing their limited options and wary of potential bargaining unit “raids” from other unions, the Association’s leaders decided it was in SLOCEA’s best interest to partner with a more powerful international “parent” union.

The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) seemed like the perfect candidate. This affiliation would provide SLOCEA with more leverage at the bargaining table, grow and strengthen the membership, provide funds to the strained budget, and thwart any attempts of a potential hostile takeover. There was one major concern, however; SLOCEA had been an independent union since its founding in 1947, and retaining autonomy was vitally important to members. AFSCME and SLOCEA therefore agreed to enter into a three-year “trial affiliation” which allowed SLOCEA to keep its governing authority and “test the waters” before jumping in. At the conclusion of the trial affiliation, SLOCEA members would vote either to permanently affiliate with AFSCME or to disaffiliate and remain an independent Association. It seemed like the perfect solution.

To SLOCEA’s dismay, the

next three years saw countless unanswered letters and phone calls to AFSCME representatives, dismissive and condescending treatment, and dozens of broken promises. The General Manager at the time, Paul Roller, stated, “They have treated us like small-town bumpkins who they are too busy to deal with.” Requests for assistance,



The General Manager at the time, Paul Roller, stated, “They have treated us like small-town bumpkins who they are too busy to deal with.”



funds, and even a meeting to discuss SLOCEA’s dissatisfaction with AFSCME went unaddressed for months or were ignored completely. During the entire three-year affiliation, AFSCME never once sent a representative to assist with contract negotiations, grievance proceedings, or job reclassifications.

SLOCEA President Lynda Watkins wrote of AFSCME in an article in *The County Blade*, “They don’t give a damn about our problems. To them we are a very minor irritation... If the last two years has been the honeymoon, I can hardly wait to check out the rest of the marriage!”

SLOCEA members were beginning to see what a permanent affiliation with AFSCME might look like for them.

Under AFSCME’s constitution, SLOCEA’s governance would be disbanded and redirected to a Los Angeles Council, this means 90% of member’s dues would leave SLO County completely, split between the LA Council and AFSCME International in Washington DC. SLOCEA would be left with a meager 10% to cover all operating costs – a virtual impossibility. Without the means to retain staff, the responsibility would fall on members to maintain business needs of the Association. This meant managing the Association’s finances, coordinating benefit programs, and maintaining the membership all while performing their regular job duties within the County. Local labor representation would also cease to exist under AFSCME. SLOCEA Stewards would become responsible for handling grievances and appeals for SLOCEA’s 600+ represented members, and over-burdened representatives out of LA or San Francisco would travel to SLO County “as needed” for other labor matters.

If they chose to become permanently affiliated with AFSCME, SLOCEA members would have to be willing to accept all these changes with no compensation for their additional efforts.

Ultimately, the cost of affiliation was too high and the benefit far too low. In a vote conducted in October 1988, SLOCEA members voted **365 to 36** to end their relationship with AFSCME... I’m sure with a collective “Good riddance!”

**Do we have
your
Special
Emergency
Grant
form on file?**



As a benefit of Association membership, every SLOCEA member may enroll in the Association's Special Emergency Grant Program.

The program currently pays a **\$2,200 cash grant**, upon the death of the member, to the member's designated recipient.

To enroll, please fill out the form on the next page.

Email, drop in the mail, or fax it to us.

SLOCEA
info@slocea.org

Phone: 805-543-2021
Fax: 805-543-4039
1035 Walnut St.



San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association

Special Emergency Grant Program

Enrollment and Recipient Designation Form

As a benefit of Association membership, every SLOCEA member in good standing may enroll in the Association's **Special Emergency Grant Program**. The program currently pays a **\$2,200** cash grant, upon the death of the member, to the member's designated recipient ("Grant Designee"). Although this is not an insurance program, the "Grant Designee" is similar to a beneficiary for a life insurance policy. **Enrollment in the Special Emergency Grant Program is cost free** to SLOCEA members. To enroll, please complete and return this form to the Association office via any of the following methods:

- Mail to 1035 Walnut Street, San Luis Obispo 93401
- Fax to 805-543-4039
- Email to info@slocea.org

If you have any questions, please contact us at 805-543-2021

IMPORTANT:

This section MUST be completed and returned

To enroll in the Association's **Special Emergency Grant Program**, this form must be completed by the member and returned to the Association. Please fill in all the information requested and sign the form as indicated below.

PLEASE PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION

Member's Name:	Member's SS#
Member's Address:	Member's Phone #:
Member's City / Zip:	Member's Date of Birth:

Grant Designee (Person designated by member to receive the <i>Special Emergency Grant</i> payment in the event of the member's death):	Relationship to Member:
Grant Designee Phone:	Grant Designee Email Address (optional):
Member's Signature	Date of Signature

Note: The San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association's **Special Emergency Grant Program** is not an insurance program. This program is self-funded by the Association and is intended as a benefit of Association membership. The **Special Emergency Grant Program** was adopted by the Association Board of Directors and is administered through the Association's Member Benefit Committee. The Association Board of Directors retains the right to amend, modify, abolish, or replace the Special Emergency Grant Program at any time and without prior notice. **For more information, please contact SLOCEA Staff at (805) 543-2021.**



Planning to Retire?

Plan to join SLOCREA: SLO County Retired Employees' Association!

Miki Gillman,
SLOCREA
President



January's shout out goes to our Library staff. We need our public libraries now more than ever before. Modern procedures make it easy to find and check out books and to renew them as needed (you can renew online!) You can even check out movies and electronic books. Our libraries are tremendous resources for all sorts of information.

IN-PERSON LUNCHEON

In December SLOCREA had our very 1st in-person luncheon since March 2020. It was a great success! We had a banquet luncheon at the Madonna Inn. Forty-eight people attended. People were glad to see each other again. Plus we now have a whole slew of newer retirees who have joined SLOCREA who attended our lunch.

Violinist Brynn Albanese played for over half an hour for us. She also spoke about her work as an end-of-life doula. She plays her violin at various hospitals and similar facilities in SLO County and Northern Santa Barbara County. She was in Café Musique until they disbanded and was concert master of the SLO Symphony until she resigned in 2020 to follow her heart. She has been concert master of many other orchestras as well (Boston Pops, included). We are so very fortunate to have her in this county!

MEETINGS

We decided to switch our meetings to the 1st Tuesdays of the month for our March, May, October and December meetings in 2023. Our July meeting will be the 2nd Tuesday. And we will likely have indoor meetings for March, May and December, probably at the Madonna Inn, and outdoor meetings July and October. Details to be announced closer to the dates.



Upcoming SLOCREA Meetings

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday March 7, 2023

Details TBA

Dates and venues are subject to change, so please check our website at slocrea.org, or contact us via email for the latest information. We are making arrangements for those first two meetings as I write this. We anticipate that Carl Nelson will give his annual State of Pension Trust presentation in either March or May. We'll have an interesting informational presentation in whichever of those 2 months Carl does not give his presentation. Stay tuned.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

FIND US ON THE WEB

Check out our website at www.slocrea.org. We have links to many organizations important to Seniors, people considering retiring, &/or people needing info for aging relatives. Also on our website we have a brochure containing a new member application. Please let us know of any other links you'd like to see on our website.

We are an all-volunteer organization for everyone who receives a pension from SLO County Pension Trust. Everyone. Including DROPpers! Yes, if you are in DROP, you are qualified right now to join SLOCREA! Divorced and widowed spouses are also qualified to join. We are pleased that many new retirees are indeed getting application forms from our website.

Remember: The 1st year of membership is free. After that you'll have the option of renewing for 3 years @ \$40.00 or renewing annually at \$15.00 a year.

VOTING

As I'm sure you all noticed, the election for District 2 Supervisor was very, very close. A number of ballots could not be counted because they lacked the voter's signature. Others were mailed late or not received by the deadline. Oops! I hope none of you forgot to sign your ballot. Let this be a reminder to be sure our voter status is always up to date, we sign where we are supposed to and we get our ballots in on time. We don't get extensions on the voter deadlines.

NEW YEAR

What new activities and enterprises beckon you in this New Year? I'll be having cataract surgery in January, hoping this restores my color and peripheral vision as well as focus. In April we'll travel to New Zealand for the International Breast Cancer Participatory Dragon Boat Festival, along with other breast cancer survivors from all over the world.

The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of its author and are subject to change without notice. www.slocra.org.

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489-0485
MON - FRI 8AM - 5PM

YOUR RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION

- If you are called into a meeting with management, you have the **RIGHT** to know the subject of the meeting.
- If you **reasonably believe** the meeting could lead to discipline, you have the **RIGHT** to representation by SLOCEA. You must ask for that **RIGHT**. Management does **NOT** have to offer it to you.
- You have the **RIGHT** to consultation with your SLOCEA representative before the meeting.
- When in doubt, call your SLOCEA representative at **(805) 543-2021**.

SLOCEA • 1035 Walnut St., SLO 93401
www.slocea.org • (805) 543-2021

THE COUNTY BLADE  11

Wishing you a
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
 May it be filled with
 new adventures & good fortunes.

SLOCEA will be closed on January 2nd. See you in the New Year!

SLOCEA
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 on social media?
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SLOCEA



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New Year, New Benefits

Scout Bidleman,
Benefits Technician

With the new year, comes new benefits! The County is expanding the Carrum Health benefit with Oncology guidance and treatment services. In addition, the County is launching a new financial tool, GotZoom, for Student Loan relief. Both benefits will be active starting January 1.



Carrum Health is a surgery benefit offered to employees enrolled in the Anthem PPO, EPO, or HDHP medical plans. With Carrum Health, employees are provided with exclusive access to Centers of Excellence for inpatient surgical procedures with no cost-sharing. Employees are also provided with a care concierge team to help guide them through each step.



In the new year, Carrum Health is expanding to include Oncology services, consisting of Guidance to members with any cancer diagnosis, and Treatment services for non-metastatic, first-time breast cancer.

Through the Guidance service, members will have access to:

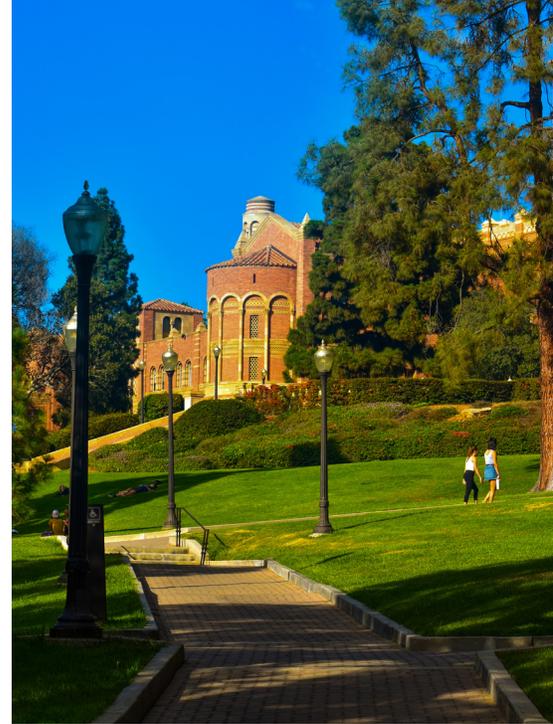
- Second opinion on their diagnosis
- Review of outside studies (pathology and imaging)
- Consultations with medical, surgical, and radiation oncologists
- Written expert opinion answering patient/local oncologist quests with proposed treatment plan
- Access to an oncology-certified nurse
- Video consultations with medical, surgical, and radiation oncologists and corresponding written reports
- Recommendation of local oncology providers

Carrum Health's Treatment service is available to members with non-metastatic, first-time breast cancer. Treatment will be available through one of the leading cancer centers in the country, City of Hope, and may include:

- Chemotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Surgery
- Breast reconstruction

More information will be available soon.

TO GET STARTED WITH CARRUM HEALTH you can visit carrum.me/PRISM or call (888) 855-7806.



GotZoom is a new financial wellness benefit that specializes in federal student loan relief. GotZoom collaborates with the Department of Education to identify, maximize, and enroll members into Federal Student Loan Repayment and Forgiveness Programs for which they are eligible. Members can participate in a no-obligation benefit analysis of their federal student loans. GotZoom will only charge for services when members fully understand and agree to the program benefits.

Getting started with GotZoom is easy.

- Access your secure portal at <https://gzenroll.com/slo>
- Register your account! (Note: GotZoom uses a two-factor authentication so have your cell phone or email ready!)
- Answer a few questions.
- Schedule your assessment for a date/time that works for you.
- Have your appointment with a financial analyst!

GotZoom's sole purpose is keeping members in a Federal Student Loan Program with maximum forgiveness for which the member qualifies. GotZoom does NOT refinance loans.

Are There Limits To How Much Pension I Will Receive?

The Formulas That Define Your Pension

Carl Nelson,
*Executive Director
San Luis Obispo
County Pension
Trust (SLOCPT)*



Yes, there are limits or “Retirement Earnings Caps”

on your pension benefit – but you probably don’t have to worry about them.

Your pension benefit – paid for life to you – is based on a formula of your:

Pension Trust Service Credits (PTSCs)
X Final Average Salary (FAS)
X Retirement Factor
A percentage that is different for Classes and Tier - e.g., Miscellaneous Tier 1 retirement factor at age 60 = 2.583%. The Retirement Factor increases the older you get.
= Unmodified Pension Benefit

There are also **Retirement Earnings Caps** on your pension that vary with various bargaining

units and pension tiers. These caps are a **percentage of your FAS** – e.g., 80% of FAS. These maximum pension amounts only apply to employees with really, really long careers in SLO County.

The Retirement Earnings Caps that apply to SLOCEA BUs are –

- Tier 1 = 80% of FAS
- Tier 2 = 90% of FAS
- Tier 3 = NA – pensions are limited by the maximum compensation allowed under PEPRA.

For example, a **Tier 1** member’s benefit might be –

$$\begin{aligned}
 &25 \text{ years of PTSCs} \times \\
 &\$70,000/\text{year FAS} \times \\
 &\text{Age 65 Retirement Factor} \\
 &3.165\% = \\
 &\$55,388/\text{yr or about } 79\% \text{ of FAS}
 \end{aligned}$$

A **Tier 1** Member has a Retirement Factor at age 65 of 3.165%. A Tier 1 Member would have to work over 25 years to reach their Retirement Earnings Cap of 80% at age 65. This is possible, but not typical.

The average service, or PTSCs, at retirement is less than 20 years and only 4% of active employees have over 25 years of service.

A **Tier 2** Member has a Retirement Factor at age 65 of 2.50%. A Tier 2 Member would have to work 36 years to reach their Retirement Earnings Cap of 90% at age 65.

A **Tier 3** Member has a different type of limit on their pension. Under State laws Tier 3 pensions can only be earned on pay up to a certain amount - \$146,042 in 2023. Above that level of pay pension contributions are not paid and no extra pension benefit is earned.

Note that the Retirement Earnings Cap is as a percentage of the Final Average Salary, or FAS used to calculate the pension. The FAS is a 12 month (Tier 1) or 36 month (Tiers 2 & 3) weighted average of the highest consecutive month pay levels.

What happens when a member works for SLO County sooooo long that they have earned their maximum pension? At that point, they are working and paying pension contributions and not earning any better pension. Typically, those long-service Tier 1 Members retire at that point, or they may go into the DROP program – which is a topic for another article.

Please call the Pension Trust at 805/781-5465 to discuss your options if you have the enviable problem of a pension that may be too big.



Yes, there are limits or “Retirement Earnings Caps” on your pension benefit – but you probably don’t have to worry about them.



Carl Nelson, CFA
*Executive Director and Chief
Investment Officer
San Luis Obispo County
Pension Trust
805/781-5465
www.SLOCPT.org*

Are Democracy's Days Numbered?

Brian Floyd

Many, many voices in the press, politics, and social media have been lamenting the decline and pending death of democracy in recent years.

The warning about the threats to the survival of democracy intensified after the 2016 election of Donald Trump. Democrats claimed the threat came from foreign election interference --- notably Russia and its dictator Vladimir Putin. Republicans claimed the threat came from government election interference --- notably from the FBI and former Intelligence officials.

Advances by authoritarian regimes in China, Russia, and Iran coupled with America's internal divisions and perceived retreat from global matters, also fueled claims that democratic nations were on a direct course to the ash heap of history.

When a mob of Trump supporters attacked the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, to prevent the counting of the Electoral College vote certifying the election of Joe Biden as the 46th President of the United States, these predictions started carrying an added weight.

Things did not look good for democracy at home or around the world.

Now two years removed from that disgusting display of January 6th, the question needs to be asked: Is democracy on death's doorstep?

The events of 2022 may provide our answer.

The greatest assault on democracy occurred last year and it wasn't in the United States. It was in Europe and was a literal assault



Apartment building destroyed through war in Borodyanka (Borodianka), Ukraine. Photo by Joel Carillet.

“

The greatest assault on democracy occurred last year and it wasn't in the United States. It was in Europe and was a literal assault on a democracy: Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

”

on a democracy: Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The world expected Ukraine to succumb to Russian occupation in a matter of weeks if not days. That did not happen.

Rather, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky rose to the moment and rallied his nation to defend its sovereignty. His leadership

and the bravery of the Ukrainian people woke their European neighbors and the United States from their delusional ignorance about Vladimir Putin's expansionist dictatorship. It revived the NATO countries and their commitment to the

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“

As we start the year 2023, if we step back from the noise bombarding us and look at the evidence on display, we should paraphrase a famous telegram from Mark Twain after his obituary was published: The news of democracy's death is greatly exaggerated. At least so far.

”

defense of freedom and democracy.

At the same time China pledged its limitless friendship to Russia. The invasion of Ukraine finally sounded the alarm about Communist China's growing threat to democracy in the Pacific, specifically to Taiwan and its neighbors, and to the world as a whole.

A bipartisan Congress increased military aid to help Taiwan defend itself against an attack from mainland China. Japan and Australia are working closely together to defend their sovereignty and independence. These democracies are not ready to surrender to authoritarianism. At least not without a bloody fight.

Inside China, the Chinese people fed up with unending Covid lockdowns, took to the streets to protest their government's policies. This is remarkably unprecedented and dangerous. The Chinese Community Party however, for a variety of reasons, completely reversed course and stopped almost all the restrictions that had been in place for nearly three years.

Large scale protests also occurred in Iran after the death of a 22-year-old woman in custody of that country's Morality Police. Uncharacteristically, the hardline Islamic regime did not crack down brutally on the protestors. And after two months of ongoing protests, the Iranian government

stated it will abolish the Morality Police. If that does indeed happen, it will be the biggest change in Iran since the 1979 Revolution.

Here in America, 946 people who assaulted the United States Capitol on January 6th have been charged. 465 have pleaded guilty to their crimes. Twitter has changed ownership and is revealing that federal government officials worked with the social media platform to suppress Americans First Amendment rights.

In the November 2022 General Election, candidates who ran claiming the results of previous elections results were fraudulent got punished by the voters of their states. Most notably Kari Lake in Arizona, Doug Mastriano in Pennsylvania, Don Buldoc in New Hampshire who parroted Donald Trump's claims about the 2020 Election. Stacey Abrams, who claimed the 2018 gubernatorial race in Georgia was stolen from her, lost her rematch with Brian Kemp.

Voters across America of every political stripe, age range, ethnic group, gender classification, education level, religious affiliation, and income status have done what they typically have done in elections past. They listened to the arguments, the accusations, and the hyperbole then cast their ballots.

The result is a message repudiating most of the Baloney Sauce (BS) served up by today's crop of politicians. It's also a call to those who have been elected to get to work solving the problems facing the American people at the national, state, and local levels.

Whether or not that message is heard, understood, and adhered to is a question yet to be answered. Too many politicians are enamored with the off-key melody of their own voices and frequently ignore what their constituents are telling them.

But that too is a part of democracy. Democracy can be confusing, is typically raucous, usually messy, often misunderstood, and perpetually fragile. Its fragility is something we must always be aware of and why we need to protect it and shore up its foundations when we spot a crack.

As we start the year 2023, if we step back from the noise bombarding us and look at the evidence on display, we should paraphrase a famous telegram from Mark Twain after his obituary was published: The news of democracy's death is greatly exaggerated. At least so far.

Brian Floyd is an author, historian, and political strategist who frequently contributes to the Blade.

Keys To Success

Briana Dickey,
Office Assistant



New year, new you, right!? 'Tis the season to set the goals for successes in the New Year.

Success... We all aspire to it, talk about it, envy those who achieve it, we think about it, and fight for it.

Triumph comes with reaching our goals, and it brings us incomparable satisfaction and happiness. It gives us a unique opportunity to be happy every day. If we achieve small goals every day and step by step, we will approach our GREAT dream.

I repeat to myself and often remind my teenage son, by achieving mini goals every day, at last, you will reach the main goal -- SUCCESS.

These are the features of what I believe is a successful person, someone who is always striving for perfection. Hopefully my list will help you to achieve your goals in the New Year. Think which of them you have and which you may still want to acquire. Or start your own list that will help you achieve your goals:

CLEAR OBJECTIVE

Without the aim, no achievement is possible. A thoroughly equipped ship with wonderful crew will arrive nowhere if it hasn't any course of direction.

ACCURATE STRATEGY

Unplanned success is a planned defeat. Accurate and logical strategy helps to realize the grandest projects. A successful person fulfills a small portion of his or her great

“
If we achieve small goals every day and step by step, we will approach our GREAT dream.
”

plan every day. If you stick to your plan, then you will be able to realize everything you want.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Positive thinking, positive attitude works wonders. (Something I must remind myself of sometimes too often) You live in the world you create for yourself. You want to live in a wonderful world—think about something wonderful! Stop being afraid of failures, and you will achieve your success.

CONFIDENCE IN SUCCESS

Confidence strengthens your potential, and doubts destroy it. If you have desire, leave all your doubts behind. Just believe in the possibility of its realization and you will have not so many obstacles in your way.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Being aware of your desires without any action will lead to nothing. Only actions, supported

by knowledge, will result in great success. Constant training, constant increase of your knowledge – these are the features that distinguish a successful person. Our world is ever changing, and only on condition of applying your new knowledge can you keep pace with time.

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

It helps us to change for the better, overcome our complexes and fears. Remember, that everything depends only on you; you are master of your fate, your success and happiness.

Self-confidence helps us to get top results where there is no premise for it.

This article is merely a presentation of my philosophy of success.

These are only words. But you can turn words into a powerful tool for improving your life from now on. Remember, it is worth the pain, time, and dedication at the end. Achieve a small goal every day!

Slowing, But Not Stopping

KEVIN TEIXEIRA

This article is provided by TD Ameritrade Institutional for the week of December 16, 2022. Article by Thomas Feltmate.



Phew, whatta week! The headlines included further evidence of softening inflation, waning consumer momentum and the much-anticipated December FOMC interest rate announcement.

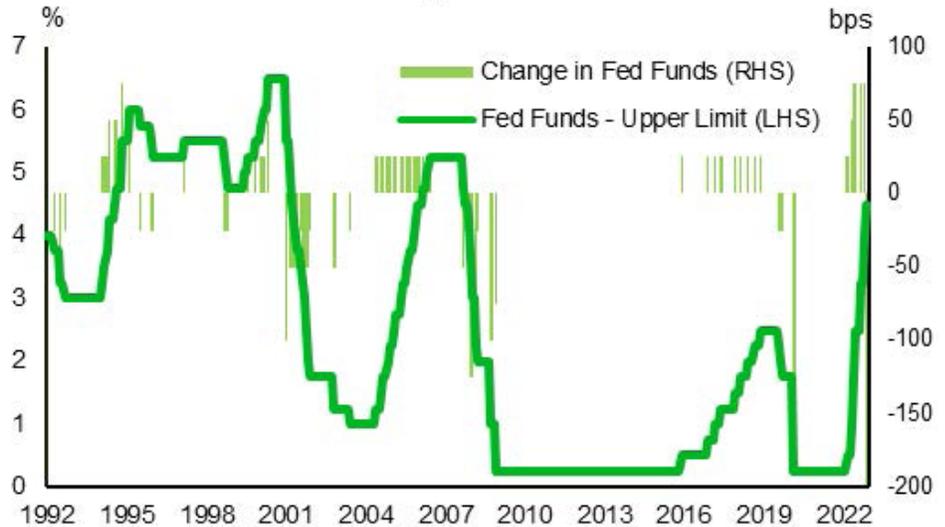
The Fed met market expectations, increasing the policy rate by “only” 50 basis-points (bps), bringing the upper-bound to 4.5%. That marked a slowdown from the 75-bps pace undertaken at the four prior meetings, but still stands as a historically fast pace of policy adjustment (Chart 1).

Beyond the interest rate announcement, the FOMC also released updated economic projections. Relative to the September assessment, Committee participants now expect growth to be considerably weaker in 2023 (0.5% vs 1.2%) and the unemployment rate slightly higher (4.6% vs. 4.4%).

Despite the more downbeat outlook, policymakers view price pressures as having become more entrenched, and upgraded the inflation outlook through 2024. As a result, the FOMC signaled rates are likely to move at least 50-bps higher than previously expected next year – implying a terminal rate of 5.25% – with cuts not beginning until 2024.

In the press conference, Chair Powell struck a somewhat hawkish tone. When asked about the recent easing in financial market conditions,

Chart 1: Fed Downshifts, But 50-bps Hike Still Significant



Source: Federal Reserve, TD Economics.

“

It was unrealistic to assume the recent strength in spending would continue indefinitely. A broader demand adjustment needs to occur over the coming quarters in order to restore price stability. It would appear we are nearing the precipice of that adjustment.

”

Powell stated that the Committee looks through near-term swings, but emphasized the importance of market conditions aligning to the Fed’s intentions. Moreover, Powell was quick to direct focus to the upward revision to the “dots”, reiterating that the Committee’s view on inflation remains skewed to the upside and thus future projections could still show an even higher terminal rate.

Despite this deliberate signaling, market participants still believe that the Fed will begin cutting rates late next year. Investors current assessment might be somewhat biased by November’s CPI data, which showed a further cooling in inflationary pressures. Core inflation rose by 0.2% m/m – a tick below market expectations – bringing the 12-month change to 6.0%. Core

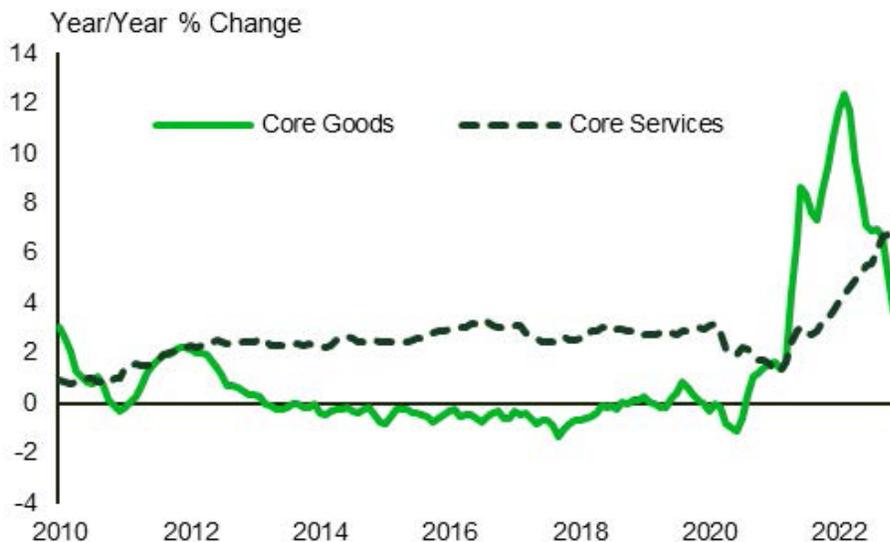
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goods prices declined for a second consecutive month, while price growth across services continued to be led by outsized gains in shelter.

That said, even after removing its effects, most other service categories continue to show strength. This cuts to the heart of the issue. With goods prices appearing to have rolled over and the shelter component expected to slow in H2'2023, the move down towards 3% inflation by the end of next year is feasible. However, until we see a more meaningful slowdown in hiring activity, leading to a cooling in wage pressures, many labor-intensive service sectors will continue to run hot – preventing inflation from moving back to 2%. Though the cumulative impact from higher rates hasn't yet hit hiring intentions, November retail sales showed consumer momentum may be waning. Sales fell 0.6% m/m – its biggest monthly drop in nearly a year – with notable declines in holiday categories including, electronics, clothing, and sporting goods.

As we noted in our Quarterly Economic Forecast, it was unrealistic to assume the recent strength in spending would continue indefinitely. A broader demand adjustment needs to occur over the coming quarters in order to restore price stability. It would appear we are nearing the precipice of that adjustment.

Chart 2: Goods Prices Continue to Ease As Services Gain Momentum



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, TD Economics.

DISCLAIMER

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EMAIL ME TODAY

at kevin@teixeiracapital.com to request your complimentary meeting.

FEEL FREE TO VISIT OUR COMPANY WEBSITE AT

www.teixeiracapital.com to view more information about our company.

I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU TODAY. THANK YOU.

1041 MILL STREET, SUITE 205, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
805.698.3520

Kevin Teixeira is an Investment Adviser Representative with Teixeira Wealth Management LLC, offering investment advisory services in the state of CA. These services are strictly intended for individuals residing in the specific state(s) referenced. Any information provided in this article is for informational and educational purposes only and is not an investment recommendation of any kind.

Labor Representation Report

For the period November 16, 2022 – December 15, 2022

MEETINGS AND BUSINESS

- Held two SLOCEA Board of Directors meetings
- Held a Finance Committee meeting
- Attended a Pension Trust meeting
- Attended a Civil Service Commission meeting
- Filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge with the Public Employment Relations Board
- Consulted with SLOCEA's General Counsel on various labor matters

MEET AND CONFER

- Attended a meeting with Human Resources and County Counsel
- Conferred with the Los Osos CSD on their performance evaluation

MEMBER REPRESENTATION REPORT

- 114 Member consults on various matters
- 4 New cases opened
- 1 Case resolved and closed
- 27 Cases currently active

Consulted and/or met on various matters including:

- Formal disciplinary actions
- Skelly Hearing
- Interactive Process
- Probationary status
- Medical Separation
- Management interpersonal matters
- County errors with step placement
- Issues with working conditions
- MOU implementation
- Step placement and recruitment
- Classification and minimum qualifications
- Performance evaluations

DON'T MISS THESE MEETINGS!

SLOCEA Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, January 18th, 2023 @ 5:45 p.m. Location: SLOCEA office at 1035 Walnut Street SLO.

SLO County Board of Supervisors Meetings

All meetings are conducted in person at the BOS Chambers. Watch online by going to the County's home page and clicking "Watch Live Video".

Tuesday, January 10th, 2023 @ 9:00 AM

Tuesday, January 24th, 2023 @ 9:00 AM

SLOCREA Meetings

Tuesday, March 7th 2023 – Details TBA

SLO County Pension Trust Board Of Trustees Meeting

Monday January 23rd, 2023 @ 9:30am –BOS Chambers



ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES

SLOCEA Board of Directors

- Executive Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Finance Committee
- Bylaws Committee
- Members Benefit Committee
- Academic Scholarship Committee
- Summer Childcare Committee
- SLOCEA Political Action Committee (SLO PAC)
- Steward Committee
- Awards Review Committee
- Communications Committee
- * County Healthcare Committee: Four Bargaining Unit Delegates

Steward Roster

Working together to build a UNITED, INFORMED and INVOLVED membership!

The purpose of the Steward Program is to promote open channels of communication between employees and SLOCEA.

The presence of active and effective Stewards at work-site locations increases member participation, helps to educate and

inform the membership and creates a united coalition working to foster improved benefits for its members.

Listed by Department

ASSESSOR

Kelly Michel

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo
Appraiser I

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Joe Ferra

BU 01 - SLO Health
Campus
Behavioral Health Clinician III

Robert Ortega

BU 01 - Atascadero
Behavioral Health Worker III

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

Lori Roberts

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo
Child Support Specialist III

COUNTY COUNSEL

Renee Cooper

BU 13 - San Luis Obispo
Administrative Assistant III

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Erin Stich

BU 13 - San Luis Obispo
Administrative Assistant III

LIBRARY

Michael Badalamenti

BU 05 - San Luis Obispo
Senior Library Associate

PARKS

Kevin Sulitz

BU 02 - Salinas District
Park Ranger I

PUBLIC WORKS

Jim Emley

BU 02 - San Luis Obispo
Custodian

Leann Siebert

BU 02 - Santa Margarita
Water Systems Worker I

Mitch Wallravin

BU 05 - San Luis Obispo
Supervising Custodian

SHERIFF-CORONER

Kathleen Curtis-Ames

BU 13 - Los Osos
Sub-Station
Legal Clerk

SOCIAL SERVICES

Garrett Frice

BU 01 - Atascadero
Employment Resource
Specialist III

Emily Landis

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo
Program Review Specialist

Nate Larsen

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo
Employment Resource
Specialist IV

Michelle Lowe

BU 05 - Atascadero
Employment Services
Supervisor

Mark McCullough

BU 01 - Nipomo
Employment Resource
Specialist III

SUPERIOR COURT

Teresa Collins

BU 19 - San Luis Obispo
Courtroom Operations
Supervisor

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU **JANUARY BIRTHDAYS!**

First Name	Last Name	Birthday	First Name	Last Name	Birthday	First Name	Last Name	Birthday
Monica	Solis	01/01	Larry	Mickey	01/12	Rebecca	Whiteside	01/23
Shirley	Jones	01/01	Robin	Walker	01/12	Sandi	Mierish	01/23
Anna-Marie	Hernandez	01/02	Joshua	Ens	01/13	Sarah	Macias	01/23
Kindra	Pauls	01/03	Melanee	Taylor	01/13	Charlene	Argie	01/24
Nicole	Ketterer	01/03	Thomas	Stennett	01/13	Justin	Smith	01/24
Chelsea	Hendron	01/04	Katie	Nyback	01/14	Meronig	Simmons	01/24
Chenoa	Wilkerson	01/04	Leslie	Jones	01/14	Taylor	Crabb	01/24
Christina	Soenksen	01/04	Regina	Samson	01/14	Vanessa	Cortes Lopez	01/24
Ivan	Rodriguez	01/05	Angie	Acosta	01/15	Joshua	Hunt	01/25
Jennifer	Hopkins	01/05	David	Barcellos	01/15	Zachary	Reineke	01/25
Stacey	Custodio	01/05	Lisa	Beals	01/15	David	Wheeler	01/26
Carmen	Salazar	01/06	Terry	Wahler	01/15	Kymberly	Kusko	01/26
John	Whitcomb	01/06	Bephens	Legg	01/16	Patricia	Rios	01/27
Laurie	Gutierrez	01/06	Cara	Goldensmith	01/16	Eva	Wilson	01/28
Robert	Simpson	01/06	Kerri	Cuellar	01/16	Lynda	Deringer	01/28
Kimberly	Seaman	01/07	Sera	Levy	01/16	Micaela	Anderson	01/28
Robert	Clark	01/07	Julieanne	May	01/18	Alyssa	Rabener	01/29
Sarah	Matias	01/08	Tim	O'Keeffe	01/18	Crystal	Cullen	01/29
Telesforo	Galindo	01/08	Dawn	Glove	01/19	Donna	Hayes	01/29
Aaron	Hope	01/09	Ezmeralda	Cantu	01/19	Michelle	Cuellar	01/29
Athena	Wilson	01/09	Marissa	Whitaker	01/19	Angelica	Ruvalcaba	01/30
Connie	Munguia	01/09	Heather	Miranda	01/20	Jay	Wells	01/30
Jose	Aguilera-Galvan	01/09	Joanie	Ladley	01/20	Kyle	May	01/30
Monique	Matta	01/09	Reina	Paleo	01/20	Leslie	Terry	01/30
Rebecca	Arellano	01/09	Janet	Limon	01/21	Jim	Emley	01/31
Triesha	Miller	01/09	Lauren	Silva	01/21	Lorena	Gomez	01/31
Alejandro	Simental	01/10	Angela	Ford	01/22			
Shelby	Fredrick	01/10	Kari	Thomas	01/22			
Anabel	Vargas	01/11	Gary	Harper	01/23			
Denise	Ankele	01/11	Hannah	Sharon	01/23			
Guadalupe	Velazquez Ross	01/11	Hilda	Sparks	01/23			
Kimberley	Hampton	01/11	James	Blundell	01/23			
Sylvia	Aldana	01/11	Molly	Heintz	01/23			
Dustin	Idler	01/12	Neyva	Monge	01/23			

If your birth date is not listed above it is because we do not have it in our database. Please help us keep our records up to date by contacting us at 805-543-2021.

WELCOME **NEW MEMBERS**

Name	Department	Name	Department
Anais Sanchez	Agricultural Commissioner	Andrew Knighton	Planning & Building
Alexander Viles	Airports Department	Rosana Esparza	Planning & Building
Anthony Trujillo	Clerk- Recorder	James Cooper	Public Works
Laura Velazquez	Health Agency	Jake Hudson	Public Works
Brant Coolidge	Health Agency	Ryan Hodges	Public Works
Grace Miller	Health Agency	Daniel Lopez	Public Works
Kristin Fierman	Health Agency	Dillon Sly	Public Works
Alyssa Devantier	Health Agency	Sylvia Choi	Public Works
Tanya Railsback	Health Agency	Tommie Lehar	Sheriff-Coroner Office
Jennifer Maddox	Health Agency	Yvette Franco	Social Services
Alexander Moreno	Health Agency	Melissa Stewart	Social Services
Priscilla Sisommtout	Library	Fernando Alamillo	Social Services
Jessica Wagner	Parks & Recreation	Sarah DePriest	Social Services
Kaylie Schreihans	Planning & Building	Brittany Omundson	Social Services

Service Anniversaries

The following county, courts and locsd employees will reach a significant service anniversary during the month of JANUARY. We list those employees who have reached their 5th, 10th, 15th and higher years of employment.

These anniversaries represent the hire date of our members, not time in service accumulation.

Congratulations to these employees for their years of service!

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

First Name	Last Name	Dept.	Years Of Service	First Name	Last Name	Dept.	Years Of Service
Joseph	Phillips	Public Works ISF	37	Leslie	Terry	Public Health Dept.	17
Terry	Wahler	Planning Dept.	36	Michelle	Daillak	Dept. of Social Services	17
Cynthia	Fraysier	Sheriff-Coroner	30	Peter	Hague	Public Health Dept.	17
Karen	McCoy	SLOC Child Supp. Ser.	29	Todd	Adams	Planning Dept.	17
Jeanette	Johnson	Assessor	27	Anabel	Vargas	Dept. of Social Services	16
Kermit	Spears	Public Health Dept.	25	Araceli	Solorio	Dept. of Social Services	16
Meronig	Simmons	District Attorney	25	Beatriz	Hurtado	Dept. of Social Services	16
Thomas	Hart	Public Works ISF	25	Gina	Forgette	Behavioral Health	16
Maria	Vega	Dept. of Social Services	24	Jeffrey	Elliott	Behavioral Health	16
Erma	Gonzalez	Public Health Dept.	23	Kathy	McGuire	Behavioral Health	16
Jacilyn	DiCarlo	Dept. of Social Services	23	Maria	Prado	Dept. of Social Services	16
Jay	Hebrard	Fleet Services ISF	23	Maribel	Martinez	Dept. of Social Services	16
Kerstin	Hewitt	Public Health Dept.	23	Michelle	Lowe	Dept. of Social Services	16
Michael	Hill	Public Works ISF	23	Neri	Diaz	Dept. of Social Services	16
Antoinette	Borraccino	Behavioral Health	22	Rebecca	Tanner	Assessor	16
Mark	Ayler	ITD	21	Robyn	Yakush	Dept. of Social Services	16
Stephen	Schulte	Assessor	21	Ruby	Remigio	Dept. of Social Services	16
Laura	Smith	Library	20	Veronica	Delgadillo	Dept. of Social Services	16
Nancy	Goldsmith	Public Health Dept.	20	Marsha	Jepsen	Assessor	15
Kenneth	Pang	Public Works ISF	19	Heather	Sowell	Probation Dept.	10
Linda	Wolff	Public Health Dept.	19	Jessica	Cozzetto-Duong	Behavioral Health	10
Michael	Boyce	Public Works ISF	19	Molly	Heintz	Public Health Dept.	10
Leticia	Ramirez	Public Health Dept.	18	Amy	Allen	Behavioral Health	5
Scott	Pagent	Golf Courses	18	Caitlin	Carnes	Behavioral Health	5
Cara	Goldensmith	Dept. of Social Services	17	Donald	Moore	Planning Dept.	5
Charlene	Argie	Dept. of Social Services	17	Esther	Santiago	Probation Dept.	5
Dawn	Gardner	Dept. of Social Services	17	Laine	Bauer	Agricultural Commissioner	5
Dawn	Tabin	Sheriff-Coroner	17	Melody	LaDow	Sheriff-Coroner	5
Keith	Kuiken	Regional Parks	17	Ryan	Monie	Public Works ISF	5

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME!

Would you like to submit a feature article, commemoration, or member recognition article for publication in the County Blade? The County Blade welcomes contributions from members!

Guidelines

- Articles must be in MS Word format.
- 600 words or less.
- Content must comply with SLOCEA's editorial policy as determined by the Editorial Committee. Submission of an article is no guarantee of publication.

Email to: info@slocea.org

Mail or hand deliver to:

The County Blade, 1035 Walnut Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Print deadline is the second Friday of every month for the following month edition.

