

# THE COUNTY BLADE



VOLUME 41, NO. 1

JANUARY 2026

## REPRESENTATION DOESN'T PAUSE BETWEEN CONTRACTS

**FIND  
FEATHERS!**



SLOCEA's mascot, **FEATHERS**, is hidden somewhere in this month's edition of The County Blade!

The **FIRST FIVE** SLOCEA members to find Feathers win a **\$5 JAMBA JUICE GIFT CARD!**

Email **INFO@SLOCEA.ORG** with the page number where you found Feathers for a chance to win!



**SLOCEA'S  
OPEN HOUSE  
JANUARY 28TH**

**SLOCEA  
PARTNERS WITH  
AMBA TO EXPAND  
MEMBER BENEFITS**

**INSIDE THE  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH LAB**

## 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.

#### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Nate Larsen  
**PRESIDENT**

**Dept. of Social Services, Seat 1**

Norma Domingo  
**VICE PRESIDENT**  
**Public Health, Seat 2**

VACANT  
**SECRETARY/TREASURER**

#### B.U. #1 PUBLIC SERVICES UNIT

Jeannette Rivera  
**Behavioral Health, Seat 5**

Mark McCullough  
**Dept. of Social Services, Seat 6**

VACANT  
**Seat 7**

Ryan Barney  
**Veteran's Services, Seat 8**

Chelsea Hendron  
**Public Services, Seat 9**

#### B.U. #2 TRADES, CRAFTS & SERVICES UNIT

VACANT  
**Seat 10**

Ben Franco  
**Airports, Seat 11**

#### B.U. #5 SUPERVISORY UNIT

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**Parks, Seat 12**

#### B.U. #13 CLERICAL UNIT

Crissie Danley  
**Sheriff-Coroner's Office, Seat 13**

Arlene Hernandez-Tapia  
**Behavioral Health, Seat 14**

#### COURT SUPERVISORY UNIT

VACANT  
**Seat 15**

#### LOS OSOS CSD

Carol Gilmer  
**LOCSD, Seat 16**

#### AT LARGE

VACANT  
**Seat 17**

VACANT  
**Seat 18**

VACANT  
**Seat 19**

# THE COUNTY BLADE

## SLOCEA San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association

605 Santa Rosa St.  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
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E-mail: [INFO@SLOCEA.ORG](mailto:INFO@SLOCEA.ORG)  
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#### OFFICERS

Nate Larsen  
**President**

Norma Domingo  
**Vice President**

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#### STAFF

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**Executive Director**

Brooke Daphne  
**Labor Representative II**

Jennifer Tate  
**Labor Representative I**

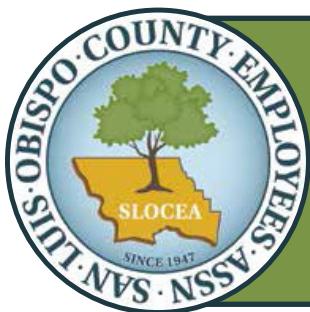
Carrie McGrath  
**Labor Representative I**

Briana Dickey  
**Office Administrator**

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:** Vineyard in Paso Robles.  
**Photo Credit:** Dennis Swanson via iStock by Getty Images.

YOU ARE INVITED TO:

# SLOCEA'S OPEN HOUSE

COME ENJOY A HAPPY HOUR  
DRINK & TASTY SNACKS

TOUR THE NEW SLOCEA OFFICE  
THAT ALLOWS FOR MORE MEMBER  
ENGAGEMENT AND IN-HOUSE  
BOARD OF DIRECTOR & COMMITTEE  
MEETINGS.



 Wednesday, January 28th  
4:30pm - 6:30pm

 605 Santa Rosa Street, SLO  
\*Right next door to the old location

For more info call the SLOCEA office 805-543-2021

# Representation Doesn't Pause Between Contracts

**Emily Landis,**  
Executive Director

**A**s we begin a new year, many SLOCEA members are entering 2026 with an important source of stability already in place: employment contracts that clearly define wages, benefits, and working conditions. With agreements in effect for the majority of represented units, the focus shifts away from negotiations and toward ensuring those contracts are understood, respected, and applied consistently in the workplace.

While bargaining often receives the most attention, much of the union's work takes place between contracts. This is the period when contractual rights are put into practice and when representation shows up in day-to-day ways that directly affect members' working lives.



In some cases, the role of the union is to provide clarification or guidance. In others, it involves advocating directly on behalf of a member. In 2025, SLOCEA opened 93 cases wherein labor representatives intervened on behalf of a member with the County. Types of cases range from ADA Accommodations to Disciplinary Issues and everything in between.

This work is often individualized and happens behind the scenes, but it plays a critical role in maintaining fairness and consistency. It also allows SLOCEA to identify patterns and address issues before they escalate, helping to protect the integrity of the contract and the working conditions it establishes.

## ENSURING THE CONTRACT WORKS AS INTENDED

A contract is only effective if it is implemented properly. Between negotiations, SLOCEA works with members to help them understand

how contract provisions apply in real-world situations—from leave and premium pay to scheduling and benefit protections.

Members are encouraged to contact SLOCEA whenever something feels unclear or inconsistent. Reaching out early often makes it easier to resolve concerns and prevents misunderstandings from becoming larger issues. Asking questions or seeking clarification is not a disruption; it is an essential part of ensuring that contractual rights are meaningful and enforceable.

## MEMBER PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE DIRECT SUPPORT

In addition to workplace representation, SLOCEA administers several member programs designed to provide direct, tangible support during important moments in members' lives. These programs are an important part of the Association's work between contracts and reflect a commitment to supporting members beyond the workplace.

SLOCEA's Survivors Endowment Grant and Personal Crisis Grant provide financial assistance during times of loss or unexpected hardship. These programs require careful administration to ensure requests are handled with sensitivity, confidentiality, and fairness. The SLOCEA Academic Scholarship Program supports members and their

## REPRESENTATION HAPPENS BETWEEN NEGOTIATIONS

Union work does not slow down once a contract is ratified. Between bargaining cycles, SLOCEA's focus is on enforcement, advocacy, and support. Members reach out with questions or concerns related to discipline, leave usage, classification issues, policy changes, and workplace disputes.



families as they pursue educational goals, while the Summer Childcare Program, facilitated by SLOCEA and funded by the County, helps offset childcare costs during the summer months, a meaningful benefit for working families.

Each of these programs requires significant time to administer, including reviewing applications, verifying eligibility, and ensuring funds are distributed responsibly. While this work is not always visible, the impact is direct and meaningful for the members who rely on these programs. More information about these programs is available at [www.slocea.org](http://www.slocea.org).

SLOCEA is also partnering with Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA) in early 2026, to offer our members access to group supplemental insurance plans, webinars, resources and discount programs.

## LIMITED BARGAINING IN 2026

While most SLOCEA-represented units are mid-contract, there are two bargaining units that will return to the negotiating table in 2026.

SLOCEA will be bargaining on behalf of members at the Los Osos Community Services District, where the current contract expires on June 30, 2026. We anticipate beginning negotiations early this year. In addition, SLOCEA will return to the table later in 2026 for members at the Superior Court. Their current agreement is a one-year contract and is set to expire on September 30, 2026.

## STABILITY IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Although contracts provide predictability, workplace conditions continue to evolve. Policy updates, operational changes, and budget considerations can all affect employees, even mid-contract. SLOCEA remains attentive to these developments and works to ensure that changes are consistent with

existing agreements and do not undermine member rights.

This ongoing attention is a key part of representation. It reflects a commitment not only to responding when problems arise, but also to maintaining awareness and advocating for members as circumstances change.

## MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

As the year begins, SLOCEA remains committed to clear communication, accessible support, and consistent advocacy. Members are encouraged to reach out with questions or concerns—whether they

are seeking clarification, assistance with a workplace issue, or information about programs or leadership opportunities. Early communication allows for more effective problem-solving and better outcomes.

Representation does not pause between contracts. It continues through daily advocacy, education, program administration, and member engagement. As we move into the new year, SLOCEA remains focused on ensuring that existing agreements are honored and that members feel informed, supported, and confident in the representation they receive.



## GET INVOLVED: YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Strong representation depends on engaged members. SLOCEA's strength comes from members who are willing to step forward, share their perspective, and support one another. Getting involved does not require prior experience—only an interest in helping make our Association stronger.

### SERVE AS A WORKSITE STEWARD

One of the most impactful ways members can get involved is by serving as a Steward for their worksite. Stewards are a vital link between members and the union. They help share information, listen to concerns, and connect coworkers with SLOCEA when questions or issues arise. Stewards receive training, ongoing support, and guidance from SLOCEA staff. You do not need to be an expert—just approachable, willing to learn, and committed to supporting your coworkers.

### SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board members guide the direction of the Association by setting priorities, providing oversight, and representing the interests of the membership. Directors serve on a variety of SLOCEA committees, including those that facilitate member-serving programs like the Academic Scholarship program. Serving on the Board offers an opportunity to contribute to the long-term strength and direction of the Association while developing leadership skills that extend beyond the workplace.

### NOT SURE WHERE YOU FIT?

That's okay. Many members start by asking questions or learning more about what these roles involve. SLOCEA welcomes members at all levels of experience and is committed to supporting those who want to get involved.

Our Association is only as strong as the engagement of our members and the participation of a committed leadership team. If you are interested in serving as a steward, exploring Board service, or simply learning more, we encourage you to reach out to SLOCEA to start the conversation.

# SLOCEA Partners With AMBA To Expand Member Benefits

**S**tarting in 2026, SLOCEA is partnering with AMBA (Association Member Benefits Advisors) to bring our members new optional supplemental insurance offerings and an expanded set of discount and savings programs—all designed to support you and your family beyond the workplace.

This partnership is about adding value to your membership: more choices, easier access to reputable benefit options, and practical discounts you can use year-round.

## WHAT'S CHANGING

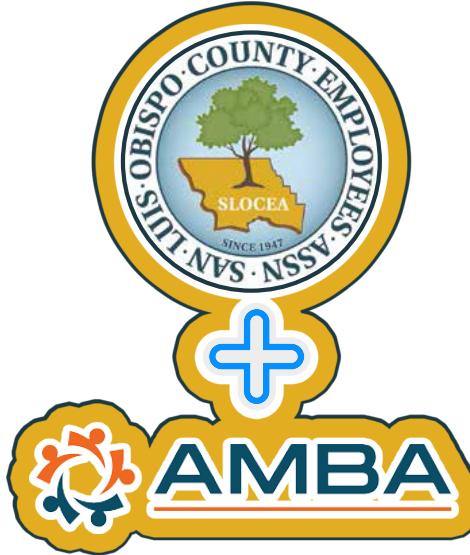
### OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE OPTIONS - NEW FOR 2026

Many of us rely on our core benefits, but unexpected expenses still happen—an injury, an ER visit, a hospital stay, or a major diagnosis can create out-of-pocket costs fast. Through AMBA, SLOCEA members will be able to explore voluntary (member-paid) supplemental coverage options that can help fill gaps when life throws a curveball.

Depending on plan availability and eligibility, offerings may include options such as:

- Accident insurance
- Hospital indemnity coverage
- Critical illness coverage
- Short-term disability
- Term life insurance
- Additional voluntary protections

These plans are optional, and you choose what—if anything—fits your household needs and budget.



### DISCOUNT PROGRAMS AND MEMBER PERKS

In addition to insurance options, AMBA will provide access to discount programs that can help members save on everyday spending and bigger purchases. These programs commonly include discounts such as:

- Travel and hotels
- Theme parks, movies, and entertainment
- Shopping and electronics
- Local and national retailers
- Wellness and lifestyle services

## WHAT'S NOT CHANGING

To be clear: this partnership does **not** replace your core County benefits or your negotiated contract protections.

Your County medical/dental/vision and retirement benefits remain separate from this partnership.

SLOCEA membership remains focused on representation, bargaining, and enforcement—this is an added layer of optional member support.

## WHY SLOCEA IS DOING THIS

SLOCEA's mission is to improve members' lives at work—and we also hear consistently that members want more support outside of work, especially with cost-of-living pressures and unpredictable expenses.

This partnership helps SLOCEA:

- Expand member value without reducing representation resources
- Offer access to optional protections that may help with unexpected costs
- Provide discounts members can use immediately in daily life

## WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

In the coming weeks, SLOCEA will share:

- A clear list of the supplemental insurance options available
- Eligibility rules and enrollment details
- A guide to the discount platform and how to start using it

## STAY TUNED AND GET READY

When the 2026 rollout details are released, we'll provide links, key dates, and "how-to" steps to make it easy to evaluate your options.

**WATCH FOR:** a benefits overview, enrollment timeline, and instructions in early 2026.

Questions now? Email [info@slocea.org](mailto:info@slocea.org) with "AMBA Benefits" in the subject line, and we'll make sure your question is included in our upcoming Q&A.



# DECEMBER'S FIND FEATHERS WINNERS!



1. Linda Perales - Dept Social Services
2. Patricia Rios - Public Health
3. Melissa Hamann - Agricultural
4. Leti Magallon - Probation
5. Dawn Tabin - Sheriff-Coroner



## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

*I have a dream*

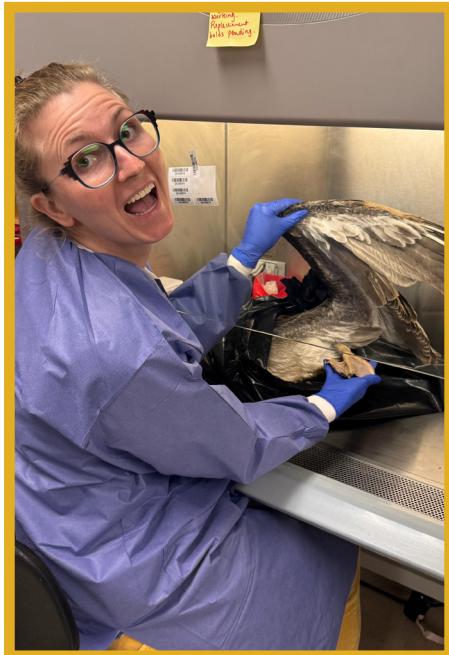
**THE SLOCEA OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED  
MONDAY, JANUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>**

# Behind The Scenes Inside The Public Health Lab

**Carrie McGrath &  
Jennifer Tate,  
Labor  
Representatives I**



When Carrie and I began planning this month's feature, our goal was to introduce readers to the Department of Public Health and the many ways it supports our community. It quickly became clear that the department's reach is far too broad to capture in a single article. Much of its work happens quietly, behind the scenes, touching nearly every corner of the County.



Elizabeth Farrington examines a pelican.



Farrington shucks oyster samples, testing for bacterial contamination. San Luis Obispo's laboratory is one of only a few in the state certified to test shellfish meat.

So we decided to start with one essential role: the **Public Health Microbiologist**.

We spoke with Elizabeth Farrington, whose work takes place almost entirely in the laboratory—yet directly impacts people across the county every day. Elizabeth tests specimens that arrive from hospitals, physicians' offices, public health nurses, and even the environment. These can include water samples, oysters, wildlife, and animals submitted for rabies testing. Each specimen represents a potential public health concern and an opportunity to act early.

One example of this work is shellfish testing. Oyster samples from growers across California—often from Morro Bay—are processed using strict safety protocols and tested for bacterial contamination. San Luis Obispo's Public Health lab is one of only a few in the state certified to test shellfish meat, making it a critical safeguard for coastal food safety.

The lab also supports wildlife disease surveillance. A pelican submitted for West Nile virus monitoring, for example, may have throat swabs collected and sent for RNA testing. These results help public health officials track disease activity and respond before risks spread to people.

What sets the Public Health lab apart, Elizabeth explained, is its purpose. While private labs focus on individual patient care, the Public Health lab exists solely to protect the broader community. When highly communicable diseases like measles or tuberculosis are suspected, specimens are routed directly to the Public Health lab so action can happen quickly.



The 2025 microbiology lab group: (from left to right) Janna Kliewer, Lucia Martinez, Joyce Bolivar, Elizabeth Farrington, Katrina Erwin, Shannon Crowley, Dr. Glen Miller.

"The goal is to identify communicable diseases as quickly and efficiently as possible so the rest of Public Health can respond," Elizabeth said. Once results are available, public health nurses, epidemiologists, and infection control teams can begin contact tracing and prevention efforts. As Elizabeth put it, "You couldn't do anything without the results."

Elizabeth described her work with pride and a strong sense of responsibility. She doesn't see specimens as abstract samples, but as people waiting for answers. Each result brings clarity, prevention, or peace of mind to someone in the community.

No two days in the lab are the same. Microbiologists specialize in areas such as bacteriology, virology, mycology, and environmental microbiology. Elizabeth's favorite? Mycology—the study of molds—because

of their intricate structures and unique growth patterns under the microscope.

Flexibility and teamwork are essential. When urgent specimens arrive, priorities shift immediately. Elizabeth credits the lab's collaborative culture for making that possible, saying she's grateful to work alongside "amazing collaborative scientists" whose shared goal is improving community health.

The lab's importance was

especially clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, when staff quickly implemented new testing methods and later helped identify virus variants so limited treatments could be used effectively.

Whether it's preventing the spread of tuberculosis, determining rabies risk, or stopping an outbreak before it begins, the work of the Public Health lab quietly protects us all.

As Elizabeth said, "We're the safety net. Our mission is to protect the community—so we're going to keep protecting the community."

“

**The goal is to identify communicable diseases as quickly and efficiently as possible so the rest of Public Health can respond**

”

## COLLABORATING TO FORM A UNIFIED, WELL-INFORMED, AND ACTIVELY ENGAGED MEMBERSHIP!

### Listed by Department

#### AIRPORT

**Ben Franco**  
BU 02 - San Luis Obispo Airport  
Airports Maintenance Worker

#### ANIMAL SERVICES

**Crystal Cullen**  
BU 01 - San Luis Obispo Animal Control Officer

#### ASSESSOR

**Miranda Donaldson**  
BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Appraiser II

#### Chelsea Hendron

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Geographic Information Systems Analyst II

#### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**Sam Cvetovac**  
BU 01 - Arroyo Grande  
Adult Services  
Behavioral Health  
Clinician II

**Savannah Donovan**  
BU 01 - Paso Robles  
- Drug & Alcohol  
Behavioral Health  
Specialist II

**Janet Soto**  
BU 01 - Arroyo Grande  
Youth Services  
Behavioral Health  
Clinician II

**Emma Sturm**  
BU 01 - Atascadero  
Adult Services  
Behavioral Health  
Clinician II

#### CLERK-RECORDER

**Lucia Maceri**  
BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Clerk-Recorder Assistant II

#### COUNTY COUNSEL

**Renee Cooper**  
BU 13 - San Luis Obispo  
Administrative Assistant III

#### DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**Beth Raub**  
BU 05 - San Luis Obispo  
Victim Witness Supervisor

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**Allen Dailey**  
BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Geographic Information Systems Analyst III

#### LIBRARY

**Chelsea Cutler**  
BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Library Associate III

#### Kate Mitchell

BU 01 - Arroyo Grande  
Librarian

#### PARKS

**Kevin Sulitz**  
BU 02 - Salinas District Park Ranger I

#### PLANNING AND BUILDING

**Angela Garcia**  
BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Building Plans Examiner I

#### PROBATION

**Esther Santiago**  
BU 13 - San Luis Obispo  
Departmental Personnel Technician

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

**Norma Domingo**  
BU 13 - San Luis Obispo  
Accounting Technician

#### Elizabeth Farrington

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Public Health  
Microbiologist I

#### PUBLIC WORKS

**Mitch Wallravin**  
BU 05 - San Luis Obispo  
Supervising Custodian

#### SHERIFF-CORONER

**Crissie Danley**  
BU 13 - Records & Warrants  
Legal Clerk II

#### SOCIAL SERVICES

**Heather Griffin**  
BU 01 - Arroyo Grande  
Employment Resource Specialist III

**Freddy Hernandez**  
BU 01 - San Luis Obispo  
Program Review Specialist

**Nate Larsen**  
BU 05 - Paso Robles  
Employment Services Supervisor

**Mark McCullough**  
BU 01 - Nipomo  
Employment Resource Specialist III

**Thomas McGarvey**  
BU 05 - Arroyo Grande  
Employment Services Supervisor

**Rita Villaseñor**  
BU 01 - Paso Robles  
Employment Resource Specialist III

#### IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A WAY TO GET INVOLVED WITH SLOCEA, CONSIDER BECOMING A STEWARD

**ELIGIBILITY:** You must be a SLOCEA member for at least one year.

As a Steward you will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of your rights as a public employee.
- Learn how to be an advocate and source of information in your workplace.

*To learn more, please contact Brooke Daphne or Carrie McGrath at [info@slocea.org](mailto:info@slocea.org) or 805-543-2021.*





# HUMAN RESOURCES

Learning & Development Center Newsletter  
January Blade 2026

## CONGRATULATIONS SUPERVISOR ACADEMY GRADUATES



### AVAILABLE CLASSES

**CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO ENROLL IN UPCOMING CLASSES**

- New Employee Orientation - January 14<sup>th</sup> - 9:00am-4:30pm
- Learning Roundtable - Effective Communication for High Performing Teams - January 15<sup>th</sup> - 1:00pm-3:00pm
- Red Cross Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED - January 21<sup>st</sup> - 9:30am-12:00pm
- Red Cross Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED - January 21<sup>st</sup> - 1:00pm-3:30pm
- Supervisor Essentials - January 22<sup>nd</sup> - 12:30pm-4:30pm

### Mandatory Recycling Training

[Click here to complete](#)

SB 1383, California's recycling law, mandates training for various entities on proper organic waste handling and recycling. This includes educating employees, contractors, customers, and tenants on sorting waste into the correct bins. Training is required for businesses, including multi-family dwellings, and for jurisdictions to ensure proper implementation of the law.

### LDC IS OFFERING STRENGTHS COACHING

**CLICK HERE FOR MORE  
INFORMATION AND TO  
SIGN UP!**



# The Value Of DEI

**Brian Reynolds,**  
SLOCREA President

**O**ne of the more controversial topics today is “DEI.”

This is an acronym for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. If they know about it, most people are passionate on the topic, either for or against. As a Rotarian for 40+ years, I know that DEI has been a cornerstone of Rotary philosophy for a long time and still generates controversy. For full disclosure: Rotary International was a “men only” organization until the mid 1980’s and got taken to court over the policy. Rotary lost. Today, women comprise about half of all Rotarians in the USA and are leaders in every aspect of what we do.



**Diversity:** The condition of being different or having differences.

**Equity:** Justice according to natural law or right.

**Inclusion:** The act of including, the state of being included\*

I don’t know about you, but I don’t see anything controversial or upsetting in these words. Equity is an interesting concept, because it is more than simple equality. An example I read recently is about bicycles. Everyone should be able to own a bicycle (equality). Everyone deserves to own a bicycle suited to their needs (equity).

I grew up in a very diverse environment. I went to school in Fresno with people belonging to many ethnic heritages: Mexican, Asian, Armenian, African. The west side of Fresno was full of Mexican

Equity is an interesting concept, because it is more than simple equality. An example I read recently is about bicycles. Everyone should be able to own a bicycle (equality). Everyone deserves to own a bicycle suited to their needs (equity).

carnicerías, Chinese restaurants, and Japanese grocery stores. As a young man I traveled and lived abroad for two years: in Europe and in Central America. I loved foreign movies! I still travel a lot, especially to Mexico and Spain. For me, diversity is the “spice of life.”

For some reason, I always felt like I needed to protect the underdog... maybe because of my difficult childhood. I loved puppies, other children, and fought back against schoolyard bullies. I believed then and now, that the fundamental requirement of a peaceful world is to respect the rights of others. Equity fits into this idea.

As a kid I was pretty smart, but not very athletic, at least in organized sports. I always got picked last for

the various teams. While some boys joined football, I joined the Math Club. I wanted to be included in the worst way. Inclusivity is both a gift and an obligation.

I am going to end this article with some speculation: Most people believe in the value of DEI, in their heart of hearts. The forces that demonize the concept are trying to divide us by creating and fanning false fears and misplaced hatred. Each one of us can push back on this by loving and respecting our neighbors...not just people who live nearby but anywhere in the world... and not just the humans but all of the creatures and of the planet.

\*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary

## ABOUT SLOCREA

Everyone who receives a pension from Pension Trust is eligible to join. First year is free, then dues are \$15.00 per year or \$40.00 for 3 years. Such a deal!

We are an all volunteer organization. Each year we have 3 lunch meetings with a speaker, one holiday luncheon with entertainment, and one BBQ/potluck picnic (outdoors).

[www.slocrea.org](http://www.slocrea.org)

# Digbi Health Launches In January

County Benefits Team

**L**aunching January 1, 2026, Digbi Health will replace former Livongo services and provide eligible members with a comprehensive approach to weight management, digestive health, diabetes support, and access to GLP-1 medications for select members.

## WHAT IS DIGBI HEALTH?

Digbi Health is a 52-week personalized health program that uses insights from genetics, gut health, and lifestyle data to tailor care to your unique biology. The program is available at no cost to eligible members enrolled in a County health plan.

Digbi Health may be a good fit if you are managing:

- Weight or metabolic health
- Type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes
- Digestive or gut health concerns
- GLP-1 medications for weight management

## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM?

Eligible participants receive:

- Gut & Gene at-home test kits
- A continuous glucose monitoring device (short-term use)
- Personalized meal recommendations
- Ongoing support from a dedicated health coach
- Access to GLP-1 medications for weight management, if eligible



## GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To participate in the Digbi Health lifestyle program (without GLP-1 medications), members must:

- Be 18 years or older
- Be enrolled in Blue Shield through the County
- Meet at least one of the following criteria:
- BMI 30 or higher
- BMI 25–29 with a related cardiometabolic condition
- High blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes

## QUALIFYING GASTROINTESTINAL CONDITION

Participation is voluntary unless you are seeking GLP-1 medications for weight management.

## GLP-1 REQUIREMENTS

Members seeking GLP-1 medications for weight loss must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be 18 years or older
- Be enrolled in Blue Shield
- Meet one of the following:
- BMI 40 or higher (no comorbidity required), or
- BMI 35–39 with at least one related comorbidity

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Digbi Health will be the sole prescriber for all weight-loss GLP-1 medications
- Members must demonstrate a

minimum 5% weight loss within 90 days of starting a GLP-1 to continue therapy

## RE-CERTIFICATION FOR CURRENT GLP-1 USERS

Employees or dependents already using GLP-1 medications for weight management must complete a 90-day re-certification with Digbi Health.

- Re-certification period begins January 1, 2026
- Must be completed by March 31, 2026
- Continued coverage is contingent on meeting Digbi's eligibility and progress criteria

## GLP-1 MEDICATION COST SHARE

Beginning January 1, 2026, weight-loss GLP-1 medications will have:

- 30% coinsurance
- Maximum of \$150 per month

This applies only to GLP-1 medications prescribed for weight management, not diabetes treatment.

## HOW TO GET STARTED

Check your eligibility at:  
[digbihealth.com/prism](http://digbihealth.com/prism)

- If eligible, download the Digbi Health app
- Complete onboarding and confirm your shipping address
- Your test kits will be mailed automatically

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For support or questions, reach out to Digbi health via email at [prism@digbihealth.com](mailto:prism@digbihealth.com) or via phone at (866) 344-2189.

JANUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>

# NATIONAL HOUSEPLANT APPRECIATION DAY



## 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!

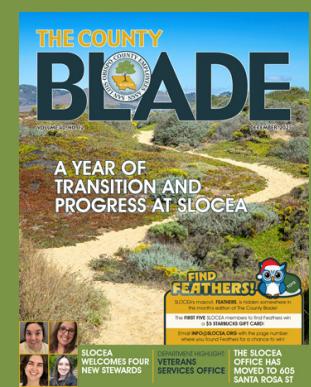
### Guidelines

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

**Email to:** [info@slocea.org](mailto:info@slocea.org)

**Mail or hand deliver to:**

The County Blade,  
605 Santa Rosa St., San  
Luis Obispo, CA 93401



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

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## & LINKS TO KNOW

# Survivor's Endowment Grant

**Click here to  
download the form**

# Attorney Referral List

## SLOCEA Legal Services Program

**Click here to  
download the list**

# Wild At Work

SLOCEA members have access to discounts at major amusement parks in California, attractions in San Diego and the San Francisco Bay Area, car rentals, hotels, motels, campgrounds and more through Wild at Work.

**Click here to register  
and get discounts**

# YOUR RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION

- If you are called in to 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

805-543-2021 • [www.slocea.org](http://www.slocea.org)  
605 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo, 93401

# Service Anniversaries & New Members

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 SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

First Name	Last Name	Department	Years Of Service	First Name	Last Name	Department	Years Of Service
Joseph	Phillips	Public Works	40	Araceli	Solorio	Department Social Services	19
Karen	McCoy	Child Support Services	32	Anabel	Vargas	Department Social Services	19
Jeanette	Johnson	Assessor	30	Neri	Diaz	Department Social Services	19
Kermit	Spears	Information Technology Services	28	Veronica	Delgadillo	Department Social Services	19
Maria	Vega	Department Social Services	27	Maria	Prado	Department Social Services	19
Michael	Hill	Public Works	26	Gina	Forgette	Behavioral Health	19
Jay	Hebrard	Central Services	26	Robyn	Yakush	Department Social Services	19
Kerstin	Hewitt	Public Health	26	Ruby	Remigio	Department Social Services	19
Antoinette	Borraccino	Behavioral Health	25	Beatriz	Hurtado	Department Social Services	19
Mark	Ayler	Information Technology Services	24	Marsha	Jepsen	Assessor	18
Michael	Boyce	Public Works	22	Jennifer	Davidge	Child Support Services	10
Leticia	Ramirez	Public Health	21	Shane	Western	Assessor	10
Charlene	Argie	Department Social Services	20	Shannon	Crowley	Public Health	5
Dawn	Gardner	Department Social Services	20	Juana	Gomez Reyes	Sheriff-Coroner	5
Michelle	Daillak	Department Social Services	20	Tracy	Richardson	Probation	5
Dawn	Tabin	Sheriff-Coroner	20	Jennifer	Cavazos	Public Works	5
Todd	Adams	Planning & Building	20	Hannah	Sharon	Behavioral Health	5
Leslie	Terry	Public Health	20	Karen	Reyes	Behavioral Health	5
Cara	Goldensmith	Department Social Services	20	Zachary	Reineke	Public Works	5
Michelle	Lowe	Department Social Services	19				

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Name	Department	Name	Department
Robert Dias	Agriculture	Jennifer Franklin	Health Agency
Griffin Encinas	Assessors	Camila Hernandez	Health Agency
Erin Cole	Child Support Services	Shayla Herndon	Health Agency
Juan Rodelas	County Counsel	Bruce Dahm	Public Works
Kathleen Doughty	Health Agency	Gabriela Ramos	Sheriff-Coroner
Martha Keosababian	Health Agency	Harold Wilson	Sheriff-Coroner

## 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
- County Healthcare Committee: Four Bargaining Unit Delegates
- Strike Committee



# 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	Dustin Idler	01/12	Hilda Sparks	01/23
Michael Hicks	01/02	Daniel Liddell	01/12	Rebecca Whiteside	01/23
Alison Oksner	01/02	Thomas Stennett	01/13	Vanessa Cortes Lopez	01/24
Anna-Marie Hernandez	01/02	Melanee Taylor	01/13	Charlene Argie	01/24
Kindra Broadfoot	01/03	Roberto Downing	01/13	Justin Smith	01/24
Nicole Ketterer	01/03	Regina Samson	01/14	Derek Imus	01/24
Chelsea Hendron	01/04	Katie Nyback	01/14	Taylor Mejia	01/24
Shea Gainer	01/04	Lisa Beals	01/15	Laura Alvarez	01/25
Chenoa Wilkerson	01/04	David Barcellos	01/15	Zachary Reineke	01/25
Eric Milo	01/04	Kerri Cuellar	01/16	David Wheeler	01/26
Jason Lovering	01/04	Sera Levy	01/16	Katherine Cowart	01/26
Sergio Prado	01/05	Cara Goldensmith	01/16	Kymberly Kusko	01/26
Maria Onato	01/05	Bephens Legg	01/16	Patricia Rios	01/27
Stacey Custodio	01/05	Kyle Aparicio	01/17	Sara Craft	01/27
Boden Reaber	01/06	Julianne May	01/18	Cameron Jung-Fagan	01/27
Robert Simpson	01/06	Ronald Sural	01/18	Eva Wilson	01/28
Carmen Salazar	01/06	Erika Frost	01/18	Jeremy Freund	01/28
Cooper Walden	01/06	Joel Schwartz	01/18	Micaela Anderson	01/28
Megan Collington	01/06	Shane Gray	01/18	Lynda Deringer	01/28
John Whitcomb	01/06	Tatiana Lopez	01/19	Crystal Cullen	01/29
Cassie Berger	01/06	Fiorella Tobias	01/19	Kimberly Kidwell	01/29
Robert Clark	01/07	Ezmeralda Cantu Smith	01/19	Michelle Cuellar	01/29
Adriana Moreau	01/07	Jennifer Johnson	01/19	Mackenzie Pflegl	01/29
Natalie Brooks	01/07	Marissa Whitaker	01/19	Alyssa Rabener	01/29
Kimberly Seaman	01/07	Austin I'Anson	01/19	Angelica Ruvalcaba	01/30
Telesforo Galindo	01/08	Gabriella Sawyer	01/19	Kyle May	01/30
Brent Vanderhoof	01/08	Heather Miranda	01/20	Leslie Terry	01/30
Sarah Matias	01/08	Lauren Silva	01/21	Geoffrey English	01/30
Rebecca Arellano	01/09	Janet Limon	01/21	Jim Emley	01/31
Monique Matta	01/09	Janet Soto	01/21	Jeanette Noriega-Tapia	01/31
Alejandro Simental	01/10	Travis McGraw	01/21	Lorena Gomez	01/31
Anabel Vargas	01/11	Shannon Crowley	01/22		
Denise Ankele	01/11	Obed Elenes	01/22		
Inga Dahlstedt	01/11	Amber Weart	01/22		
Mariah Avery	01/11	Angela Ford	01/22		
Sylvia Aldana	01/11	Neyva Monge	01/23		
Guadalupe Velazquez Ross	01/11	Hannah Sharon	01/23		
Larry Mickey	01/12	Sandi Mierish	01/23		
Ariana Nevarez	01/12	Molly Morgan	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.

## DON'T MISS THESE MEETINGS!

**SLOCEA Board of Directors Meeting**  
Wednesday, January 21, 2026 @ 5:45pm.  
Contact the SLOCEA office for the Zoom link.

### 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 6, 2026 @ 9:00 AM  
Tuesday, January 27, 2026 @ 9:00 AM

### SLOCREA Meetings

January is a non-meeting month

### SLO County Pension Trust Board Of Trustees Meeting

Monday, January 26 @ 9:30 AM, BOS Chambers



