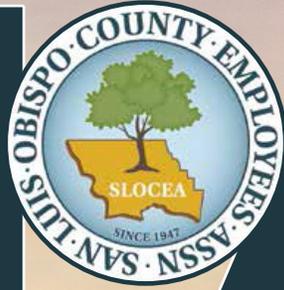


THE COUNTY

BLADE



VOLUME 41, NO. 3

MARCH 2026

REMEMBERING REV. JESSE L. JACKSON'S IMPACT ON WORKERS AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

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!



2025 VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER

KNOW YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS!

ST. PATRICK'S DAY: A CELEBRATION WITH A LABOR HISTORY

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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Norma Domingo
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Tim Faes
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Airports, Seat 18

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Seat 19

THE COUNTY BLADE

SLOCEA San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association

605 Santa Rosa St.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Phone 805-543-2021
E-mail: INFO@SLOCEA.ORG

WWW.SLOCEA.ORG

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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**

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

**BE FEATURED
IN THE
BLADE!**

**YOUR NAME
HERE!**

Age: Varies
Alias: County Employee
Last Seen: San Luis Obispo County



Description

The Blade is looking for volunteers to interview about:

- Your role in the county
- The work you do
- Why your position matters
- The impact your service has on our community
- Selected volunteers will be featured in an upcoming article highlighting the vital work being done across the county

REWARD



**GUARANTEED TO FILL YOU WITH PRIDE
SHARING THE VITAL WORK YOU DO!
YOUR STORY DESERVES TO BE TOLD!**



We'd love to interview you! Reach out below to Carrie or Jennifer.

cmcgrath@slocea.org



jtate@slocea.org

Remembering Rev. Jesse L. Jackson's Impact On Workers And The Labor Movement

Emily Landis,
Executive Director



The labor movement lost one of its most unwavering allies with the passing of Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, the civil rights leader whose life's work spanned movements, generations, and causes. Jackson died on February 17, 2026, at age 84, leaving behind a legacy rooted in justice, dignity, and economic opportunity for all. His family remembered him as a servant leader "to the oppressed, the voiceless, and the overlooked around the world."

While Rev. Jackson is widely recognized for his central role in the civil rights movement and his historic presidential campaigns, a crucial part of his legacy, and one deeply relevant to all unions, is his steadfast support for workers' rights, economic justice, and the intersection of civil and labor rights.

A LIFE BUILT ON LIFTING PEOPLE UP

Jackson's journey began in the segregated South and took him from student activism to the heart of the civil rights movement alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. After King's assassination, Jackson emerged as a key leader of the movement, expanding its reach and forging a broader conception of justice that included economic rights and worker dignity.

His work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Operation



Leading the pack of thousands of United Farm Workers supporters Sunday, April 13, 1997, in Watsonville, CA are, left to right, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, UFW President Arturo Rodriguez, The Rev. Jesse Jackson, UFW Secretary-Treasurer Dolores Huerta and AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. (AP Photo/Sam Morris)

Breadbasket connected economic justice directly to civil rights. Under his leadership, this program channeled the collective leverage of Black consumers and workers to push corporations and employers to open doors that had long been closed. Through strategic boycotts and negotiations, Jackson and his colleagues secured thousands of job opportunities for African Americans and pressured businesses to diversify their workplaces.

From those roots grew Operation PUSH and, later, the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition — organizations that combined advocacy for racial equality with campaigns for employment, education, and economic inclusion. These efforts bore witness to Jackson's belief that true justice could not be won without workers having a seat at the table and an equitable chance to prosper.

STANDING WITH WORKERS

Rev. Jackson's support for labor was not symbolic — it was tangible and consistent. He became known as "someone who has walked more picket lines and spoken at more labor rallies than any other national leader," working directly with unions to organize workers, protect their rights, and mediate disputes.

Whether lending his voice to striking workers or condemning practices that undermined worker dignity, Jackson saw the struggles of labor and civil rights as inseparable. He understood that discrimination in employment, unequal access to economic opportunity, and the suppression of collective bargaining rights were not isolated problems, but manifestations of the same systemic barriers that denied communities of color a fair chance.

For public employees and union members — whose work keeps our communities safe, educated, healthy, and thriving — Jackson’s message resonates still: economic justice is a civil right, and collective power is essential to securing it.

THE RAINBOW COALITION AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Jackson’s 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns expanded on the idea of a “Rainbow Coalition” — bringing together workers, communities of color, women, LGBTQ+ Americans, young people, and others traditionally marginalized in national politics. This coalition wasn’t merely a political strategy; it was a recognition that broad social progress depends on uniting diverse constituencies around shared economic and social goals.

Through this lens, Jackson helped broaden the national conversation about economic inequality, advocating for policies that would improve job opportunities, workplace fairness, and access to education and health care. His tireless efforts helped shift the broader progressive agenda toward issues that matter deeply to working people — including labor rights.

WHAT HIS LEGACY MEANS TO US TODAY

As a labor union, we honor Rev. Jackson not just for the civil rights victories he championed, but for the way he embedded labor and economic justice into the broader struggle for a more equitable America. His life’s work reminds us that:

WORKERS’ RIGHTS ARE CIVIL RIGHTS

Advocacy for fair wages, safe workplaces, and collective bargaining is part of the same struggle for dignity that Rev. Jackson fought for his entire life.



On Sept 22, 1969, then 27-year-old Jesse Jackson led a rally of 4,000 people in Chicago, calling for an end to discrimination in the construction trades. (Gary Settle/The New York Times)

ECONOMIC POWER STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES

Jackson understood that without access to jobs and economic opportunity, communities could not thrive and demands for justice would remain incomplete.

SOLIDARITY MATTERS

Whether in the South’s freedom marches or on the picket lines in Chicago, Jackson stood with those whose voices were too often ignored — just as unions stand with workers today.

Rev. Jackson’s impact was not limited only to his role in advancing civil rights, but extended beyond, in the way he consistently connected those struggles to the everyday realities of working people. He understood that fair wages, safe working conditions, and a voice on the job are about more than economics — they are about respect and dignity. His work reminds us that when workers are treated fairly and given the opportunity to stand together, entire communities are stronger as a result.

Rev. Jackson’s life reminds us that progress has never been automatic. It has always depended on people willing to speak up, stay engaged, and stand alongside one another —

even when doing so was difficult. That same principle is reflected every day in public service. Public employees show up for their communities, take responsibility for essential work, and rely on one another to meet the needs of the people they serve. By continuing to focus on fairness, mutual respect, and shared responsibility, we strengthen not only our workplaces, but the communities that depend on them.



The Rev. Jesse Jackson, center, walks the picket line in Miami on Wednesday, March 9, 1989, with Eastern Airlines Machinists Union District 100 President Charles Bryan, right, and an unidentified pilot, left. Jackson spoke to a Solidarity rally of about 1,000 machinists, pilots and flight attendants at the Machinists’ union headquarters in Miami. (AP Photo/Kathy Willens)



2025 VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER

.....

Thank you to all our members who generously volunteered their time throughout 2025. Your dedication and countless hours of service have made a meaningful difference in strengthening our Association.





You Have The Right To Bring Backup

Know Your Weingarten Rights!

Brooke Daphne,
Labor Representative II

Ever get that uneasy feeling when your supervisor asks, “Can you come talk to me for a



minute?” You may wonder, “Is this routine... or am I in trouble?”

If you find yourself in this situation, **Weingarten Rights** could make all the difference.

Weingarten Rights protect union-represented employees by giving them the right to request union representation during an investigative interview, though this is not limited to formal investigations. **Any meeting where you reasonably believe the conversation could lead to discipline, you have the right to have your union representative present with you.** These protections come from a U.S. Supreme Court decision and are enforced by the National Labor Relations Board.

To put it simply, if management is asking questions and you think you might get in trouble, **you do not have to face it alone.**

There is one important catch. **Management does not have to remind you of this right.** If you want a union representative present, you must ask for one. Even if the meeting sounds casual or informal, your reasonable belief that discipline could result is enough for you to

exercise your rights.

You don't even need to use legal jargon. A simple statement such as, “I believe this meeting could lead to discipline, and I would like union representation before answering any questions,” is more than sufficient.

Once you make that request, management has options, but under the law, ignoring you **is not one of them.** They can pause the meeting until a representative arrives, reschedule the meeting until your representative is able to be present, or end the interview altogether. What they cannot do is **continue questioning you** after denying or ignoring your request. To do so is a **violation of your rights.**

When a union representative is present, they are not just there to take notes. They can help clarify questions, ensure the process is fair, and provide support when things feel stressful or unclear.

It is also important to know that not every meeting triggers Weingarten Rights. Routine check-ins, work instructions, or standard performance evaluations usually do not qualify. However, if a meeting starts out routine and suddenly shifts into questioning about conduct or possible wrongdoing, you can request representation at that point.

Knowing your Weingarten Rights empowers you to protect yourself. It also strengthens our union as a whole. When members exercise their rights, it reinforces fair treatment for everyone.

PROTECT YOURSELF:
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

INVESTIGATIONS

You have a **right to representation** in any formal or informal investigation that you reasonably believe could result in discipline.



ALWAYS ASK

When you're being questioned, management **does not** have to tell you about your right to a representative. **YOU** have to ask.



PRESS "PAUSE"

You can call a stop to the meeting at any time to request union representation. You **may not** be questioned past this point with out your representative there.



CALL YOUR REP

When in doubt, call SLOCEA. We will answer questions, provide guidance, and represent you in investigative meetings.



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

Listed by Department

AIRPORT

Ben Franco

BU 01 - San Luis
Obispo Airport
Airport Operations
Specialist

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

Rosa Flores

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo
Library Associate III

Kate Mitchell

BU 01 - Arroyo Grande
Librarian

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 Dominga

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 - San Luis Obispo
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 or 805-543-2021.*

St. Patrick's Day A Celebration With A Labor History

Jennifer Tate,
*Labor
Representative I*



Every March, St. Patrick's Day arrives wrapped in green with music, celebration, and festive beverages. It is a day associated with community and Irish heritage. But in the United States, St. Patrick's Day also carries a quieter piece of history, one closely tied to workers, labor organizing, and solidarity.

In the mid-19th century, millions of Irish immigrants arrived in the United States, many fleeing famine, poverty, and political instability. What they encountered here was opportunity mixed with hardship. Irish immigrants often found employment in some of the most difficult and dangerous jobs available: building railroads, digging canals, maintaining cities, working docks, and performing the public works that allowed growing American cities to function. They were essential workers long before the phrase existed.

While the work was essential,



Civil engineers and engineering students march for St. Patrick's Day at Iowa State College in 1910. (Photo credit: March 24, 1910 issue of the Ames Times, found in their archives)

the conditions were harsh, unsafe, and poorly paid. Individual workers had little to no protection, and even less influence over wages, safety, hours, or working conditions. Out of necessity, workers turned toward each other, becoming deeply involved in the early American labor movement, not because of ideology, but because collective action offered survival and dignity. Workers learned that when they stood together, they

could demand safer workplaces, fairer pay, and respect on the job. Mutual aid societies, trade associations, and early unions grew from immigrant neighborhoods where cooperation was a practical solution to shared challenges.

St. Patrick's Day celebrations in American cities soon reflected this reality. Parades were not only cultural events; they were public expressions of belonging. Firefighters, transit workers, laborers, construction trades, municipal employees, and working families marched together, proudly visible in communities where they had initially struggled to find acceptance. The holiday became a moment when workers claimed space in civic life and affirmed that they were part of the American story.

Over time, the holiday grew into something uniquely American, a celebration not just of Irish identity,



Out of necessity, workers turned toward each other, becoming deeply involved in the early American labor movement, not because of ideology, but because collective action offered survival and dignity.



but of perseverance and community. The same spirit that encouraged immigrants to build new lives also encouraged workers to look out for one another. That spirit remains familiar today in workplaces where collaboration, representation, and shared responsibility continue to matter.

St. Patrick's Day reminds us that many of the workplace standards we now take for granted were shaped by ordinary workers who believed their voices were stronger together than apart. The holiday's joyful, communal energy reflects a simple truth: working people have always helped build our communities and institutions. That is why St. Patrick's Day resonates beyond Irish ancestry. Its American history reflects something universal: people building

community in unfamiliar places, supporting one another through hardship, and improving workplaces not only for themselves but for those who would follow.



The same spirit that encouraged immigrants to build new lives also encouraged workers to look out for one another. That spirit remains familiar today in workplaces.



Celebrating St. Patrick's Day, then, is not only about heritage. It is a day for gathering friends, sharing food and music, and, just maybe, learning a bit more about the history behind the traditions. Between the festivities and the fun, it offers a small opportunity to remember the workers whose determination helped shape the American workplace along the way.

So, as the green decorations come out, celebrations begin, and green beverages flow, it is worth appreciating both parts of the holiday. St. Patrick's Day honors heritage, yes, but it also quietly honors solidarity, resilience, and the dignity of work. However you celebrate this year, enjoy the day and take pride in the shared history of working people who helped build the path forward for generations to come.



FEBRUARY'S FIND FEATHERS WINNERS!



1. Melissa Rodriguez - Probation
2. Patricia Rios- Public Health
3. Monica Marchetti - Library
4. Jene Railsback - Behavioral Health
5. Roz Willis - Library





ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 2026

[CLICK HERE](#)
for the
Application

ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

SLOCEA awards up to \$10,000 in scholarships to new and returning students

Scholarships are based on academic achievement, community service, and extracurricular activities

Open to SLOCEA members and their immediate family

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Must be a US citizen or permanent legal resident

Must enroll in a program as a regular student seeking a degree or certificate

Must have a minimum GPA of 3.0

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are available on SLOCEA's website under "Membership Benefits"

Write a one-page essay describing your community service and academic/vocational goals

Obtain a copy of High School transcripts

Obtain two letters of reference addressed to "Scholarship Committee"

Submit application to SLOCEA via:

USPS at 605 Santa Rosa St. SLO 93401

Drop off at the SLOCEA office

Email to bdickey@slocea.org

DEADLINE - APRIL 30th



805-543-2021



bdickey@slocea.org



SLOCEA.org

Maximize Your Benefits with Tax Savings Accounts

County Benefits Team

Reminder: Healthcare FSA and Dependent Care FSA reimbursement claims for 2025 are due by March 15, 2026!



HEALTHCARE FSA

A Healthcare Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is an employer-sponsored benefit that allows pre-tax dollars to be used for eligible medical, dental, and vision expenses. Once the account is active, the full annual election is available for use.

To avoid forfeiting funds, consider common eligible expenses such as cold medicine, copays, and dental cleanings. A full list of eligible expenses is available through the online [FSA Store](#).

Up to \$660 of unused FSA funds from the previous year may roll over into the new plan year. Any unused funds exceeding \$660 will be forfeited after the March 15 reimbursement claim deadline. To learn more about how to submit a claim, please click [here](#) to watch a video tutorial.

The rollover of 2025 FSA funds will occur the first week of April. To access your 2025 rollover funds prior to that time, please contact BCC at 1-800-685-6100.

DEPENDENT CARE FSA

A Dependent Care FSA (DC FSA) allows pre-tax dollars to be set aside for eligible dependent care expenses, including daycare, preschool, and after-school care. These expenses must be for the care of children under 13 or qualifying elderly dependents.

The 2026 maximum annual contribution per household is \$7,500, and funds must be accrued in the DC FSA account before reimbursements can be made.

Unlike other FSAs, DC FSA funds do not roll over. However, 2025 eligible expenses may be submitted for reimbursement through March 15, 2026. For instructions on how to submit claims, visit the [claim submission webpage](#)

medical expenses. This account is only available to employees on the Blue Shield High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) who meet eligibility requirements.

There is no deadline for submitting HSA claims. If proper receipts and documentation are provided, claims from 2025 and even 2024 can be submitted as long as you still have funds available.

HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (HSA)

A Health Savings Account (HSA) is a tax savings account used to pay for current and future qualifying

BENEFIT DEBIT CARD

A debit card is issued for all FSA and HSA accounts. Benefit debit cards are valid for three years and allow users to directly pay for eligible expenses.

FSA & HSA EXPENSES CAN BE REIMBURSED BY:

- Paying with FSA/HSA debit card
- Using the [Smartcare App](#) to upload a photo or receipt or medical Explanation of Benefit (EOB)
- Downloading the [FSA paper form](#) and mail/email to BCC

For support regarding account balance, claim status, debit cards, eligible expenses, contact BCC by phone at 1-800-685-6100 or email them at customersupport@benxcel.com.

For more information regarding tax savings accounts, visit the [County Financial Wellness webpage](#).

Seeking Solutions To Modern Life Problems

By **Brian A. Reynolds,**
SLOCREA President



This article contains suggestions about how to cope with the strange times in which we find ourselves. Too often, it seems to me, the problems appear to overwhelm the solutions. Generally speaking, solutions are the result of people working together in common cause. We see frequent examples of individuals causing harm to others but doing good almost always requires a “committee.” In my opinion, group work (committees) get an undeserved reputation for being cumbersome and producing only flawed, overly-complicated outcomes. That is not my experience. When I worked for SLO County, I was constantly amazed and pleased at the great work of County employees.

Here are a few of today’s problems that I see:

- Loneliness and social isolation
- Too much information in general and growing difficulty in distinguishing between fact and fiction online
- Loud “voices” that proclaim

(falsely, in my view) that the “sky is falling.”

- The speed with which bad news is absorbed and shared.

Let’s take a look at some obvious and easy solutions to each of these challenges:

LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

Spend less time alone and more with other creatures, both two- and four-legged. Dog parks are a favorite of mine; human and canine creatures enjoy each others company in a friendly, safe environment. Find a group of people, preferably offline but not necessarily, who share similar ideas and values. Maybe a book club? A crafting group? A service club? Volunteering for a local group such as Big Brothers/ Sisters or CASA? Think about joining SLOCREA when you retire!!

INFORMATION OVERLOAD AND TREASURE VS. TRASH

Watch less news. The world will still be the same if you check in once a day vs. once per hour. Read something in “hard copy,” a book, a magazine, a recipe or the back of the breakfast cereal box. If something triggers your emotions...positively or negatively...

beware that it might not be fact, but fiction. When you read a book, you cannot be surveilled or “pitched” to buy something. Online, well you understand that is not a private space and online predators are out there.

LOUD, NEGATIVE VOICES

Ignore them. Laugh back at them. Their negativity is “their” problem, not yours. Negativity only yields bad outcomes. Don’t be goofy or foolish, but be positive in your activities and outlook.

LIVING AT TOP SPEED

Guess what? The apparent speed of life is not necessary or inevitable; it is contrived by the dominance of computers in our lives and the greed of others who want to sell us something, to make a buck off of us. Don’t check your email every half-hour. Read books instead of doomscrolling. Think about and perform small acts of kindness... aimed at yourself and others. Stop in midstream and look around...at the clouds, the birds, the greenery that we cherish. It’s easy and free.

In SLOCREA, we have your best interests in mind. Join us when you are ready and you will be welcomed!

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.slocreea.org



HUMAN RESOURCES

Learning & Development Center Newsletter
March Blade 2026

LDC IS OFFERING STRENGTHS COACHING

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



AVAILABLE CLASSES

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO ENROLL IN UPCOMING CLASSES

- Red Cross Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED - March 10th - 9:30am-12:00pm
- Red Cross Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED - March 10th - 1:00pm-3:30pm
- New Employee Orientation - March 11th - 9:00am-4:30pm
- DISC Training - March 12th - 1:00pm-4:00pm
- Learning Roundtable - Succession Planning: Balancing Merit and Opportunity - March 18th - 1:00pm-3:00pm
- Strengths 2.0: Leveraging Strengths for Growth - March 26th - 12:30pm-4:30pm

Webinars

[EAP Webinar - First-Time Parenting - March 17th - 10:00am](#)

YOU BELONG HERE

There's a place for you at SLOCEA

*You don't need to be an expert.
You don't need endless free time.
You just need to care.*



At SLOCEA, involvement looks different for everyone, and every contribution matters!

START WHERE YOU ARE

- No experience required
- Training & support included
- Flexible ways to get involved
- Real people. Real impact.



WHY GET INVOLVED?



- To support coworkers
- To learn new skills
- To help shape decisions
- To be part of something bigger

CURIOUS? LET'S TALK

Reaching out doesn't commit you to anything. It just opens the door.



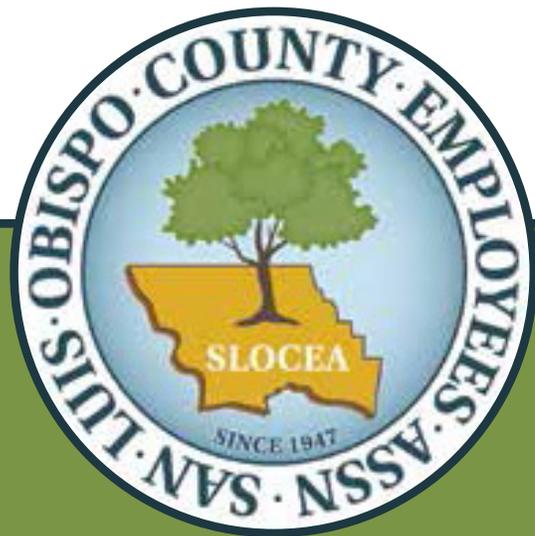
Your voice matters - and there's a place for you here.

2026 New Law: Diwali (AB 268)



Dennis Hayes,
Hayes, Ortega & Sánchez, LLP

AB 268 designates Diwali as a state holiday. Diwali, or the festival of lights, is one of India's most important holidays, and is observed in various forms by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhist groups. Although traditionally celebrated over 5 days, it is set to take place as a state holiday on the "15th day of the month of Kartik in the Hindu lunar calendar of each year." (Code Civ. Proc. § 135.) The state of California will observe Diwali on November 8, 2026.



HAVE A QUESTION?

CALL
SLOCEA

805-543-2021

What If Cats & Dogs Had Opposable Thumbs Day?

March 3, 2026

Think of all the treats we could grab if we had thumbs...

Think of all the chaos I could unleash.



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

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.



DO WE HAVE YOUR **SURVIVOR'S** **ENDOWMENT GRANT**

FORM ON FILE?

Every SLOCEA member may enroll in the **Survivor's Endowment Grant Program**

PROGRAM PAYS A
\$3,000 GRANT

To your chosen beneficiary in the event of your death



**FILL OUT A
FORM HERE**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO



SLOCEA.ORG/MEMBER-PROGRAMS



OR GIVE US A CALL AT
805-543-2021





San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association

Survivor's Endowment 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 **Survivor's Endowment Grant Program**. The program currently pays a **\$3,000** 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 Survivor's Endowment 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:

- Submit digitally via DocHub
- Mail to 605 Santa Rosa Street, San Luis Obispo 93401
- Email to info@slocea.org

IMPORTANT:

This section MUST be completed and returned

To enroll in the Association's **Survivor's Endowment 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.

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

Grant Designee (designated to receive payment in the event of the member's death):	Relationship to Member:
Grant Designee Phone:	Grant Designee Email Address:
Member's Signature:	Date of Signature:

Note: The San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association's **Survivor's Endowment 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 **Survivor's Endowment 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 Survivor's Endowment Grant Program at any time and without prior notice. **For more information, please contact SLOCEA Staff at (805) 543-2021.**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION & LINKS TO KNOW

Survivor's Endowment Grant

San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association
Survivor's Endowment 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 Survivor's Endowment Grant Program. The program currently pays a \$2,000 cash grant upon the death of the member, to the member's designated recipient ("Grant Designee"). Although this is an insurance program, the "Grant Designee" is neither a beneficiary nor a life insurance policy. Enrollment in the Survivor's Endowment Grant Program is not free to SLOCEA members. To enroll, please complete and return this form to the Association office by any of the following methods:

- Submit digitally via DocHub
- Fax to 805-543-8029
- Mail to 1055 Walnut Street, San Luis Obispo 93401
- Email to info@slocea.org

IMPORTANT:
This section **MUST** be completed and returned

To enroll in the Association's Survivor's Endowment 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.

Member's Name	Member's Sex
Member's Address	Member's Phone
Member's City/Zip	Member's Date of Birth
Member's Email Address	
Grant Designee (Name and address of recipient)	Relationship to Member
Grant Designee Phone	Grant Designee Email Address
Member's Signature	Date of Signature

Click here to download the form

Attorney Referral List SLOCEA Legal Services Program

Attorney Referral List
SLOCEA LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

This program is available exclusively to SLOCEA members and their families, and provides low-cost legal services for assistance on non-work-related legal issues.

This program has no annual fee or membership costs. When you call the attorney of your choice to make an appointment, identify yourself as a member of the San Luis Obispo County Employees' Association in order to receive your exclusive special offers. If you have any questions or need the additional information, call us at 805-543-2021.

PARTICIPATING ATTORNEYS:

Law Office of Deborah B. Curtis, PC 10175 San Carlos Avenue, Suite 100, San Carlos, CA 95050 Phone: 805-468-8844 Email: deborah@dbcpc.com Areas of Practice: Estate Planning, Business, Insurance, Consumer Protection, Real Estate, Construction & Contracts	Stalberg & Tatum 710 Santa Rosa St., Suite 200, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 Phone: 805-544-9416 Email: info@stalbergtatum.com Areas of Practice: Contract Law, Real Estate, Probate, Wills, Mediation, Small Business, Construction Law
Law Office of Stephen M. Stone, PC 1117 San Carlos Avenue, Suite 100, San Carlos, CA 95050 Phone: 805-468-8287 Email: stephen@smstonepc.com Areas of Practice: Estate Planning, Real Estate, Bankruptcy, Debt Relief	Spaulding & Grant 710 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 Phone: 805-543-8100 Email: info@slocealaw.com Areas of Practice: Workers Compensation, Personal Injury, Real Estate, Bankruptcy, Debt Relief * Fees are contingent with the Member's Compensation Amount Award

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
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 MARCH. 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!

MARCH SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

First Name	Last Name	Department	Years Of Service	First Name	Last Name	Department	Years Of Service
Sallie	Tonascia	Library	38	Michael	Badalamenti	Library	18
Richard	Simpson	Parks	36	Mary	Janowicz	Public Works	16
Brian	McLean	Public Works	28	Maria	Humphrey	Department Social Services	15
Patricia	Zepeda	Department Social Services	23	Kathleen	Cochran	Behavioral Health	10
Marissa	Whitaker	Animal Services	20	Dina	Ganotisi	Department Social Services	10
Jacqueline	Kinsey	Library	20	Crystal	Cullen	Animal Services	5
Seth	Romera	Library	19	Wilfred	Brooks	Parks	5
Ashley	Lira	Department Social Services	19	Catalina	Montano	Parks	5
Melanie	Bales	Library	19	Lauren	Sanchez	Behavioral Health	5
Enrique	Santano	Public Health	19	Gordon	Vaughn	Child Support Services	5
Elba	Vasquez	Behavioral Health	18	Christie	Castro	Behavioral Health	5

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Name	Department	Name	Department
Leticia Cervantes	Behavioral Health	Jayda Monreal	Department Social Services
Reginald Holmes	Behavioral Health	Arlene Parto	Department Social Services
Savannah Sinclair	Behavioral Health	Ashley Elliott	Department Social Services
Elsa Ledesma Huapaya	Behavioral Health	Renn Duncan	Public Health
Annrae Schultz	Clerk-Recorder	Ronalyn Amor	Public Health
Annette Alvarez	Department Social Services	Dalton Rorabough	Public Works
Princess Charlotte Butay	Department Social Services	Wyatt Mulhall	Public Works
Catherine Del Biaggio	Department Social Services	Kim Macario	Public Works
Katherine Fraser	Department Social Services	Suzie Fahle	Sheriff-Coroner
Janeyva Mendoza Ramirez	Department Social Services	Nicole Gutierrez	Sheriff-Coroner
Alejandro Vogt-Garcia	Department Social Services	Mishila Garcia	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 MARCH BIRTHDAYS!

First Name	Last Name	Birthday	First Name	Last Name	Birthday	First Name	Last Name	Birthday
Ryan	Randall	03/01	Kerry	Brown	03/12	Laura	Cullen	03/24
Annrae	Schultz	03/01	Sarah	Toste	03/13	Leann	Eddy	03/25
Kevin	Qualey	03/01	Paul	Banyi	03/13	Jennifer	Casey	03/25
Mary	Carlson	03/01	Jeffrey	White	03/14	Daniel	Van Beveren	03/25
Gabriela	Puga	03/01	Kelley	Boadway	03/14	Patrik	Johansson	03/25
Erin	Holmes	03/01	Joshua	Moore	03/14	Angela	Vasta	03/25
Owen	Shapleigh	03/01	Delaney	Potter	03/14	Aramis	Ramos	03/25
Katherine	Gross	03/02	Michael	Unks	03/15	Patricia	Righetti	03/26
Ricardo	Camacho	03/02	Monserath	Casillas-Rios	03/15	Justen	League	03/26
Dawn	Smith	03/02	Linda	Holland	03/15	Frank	Asuncion	03/26
Judith	Barrows	03/02	Luis	Gonzalez	03/15	Jennie	Stuhff	03/26
Rebecca	Vestre	03/02	Diego	Villagran Tovar	03/16	Kendall	Hipes	03/26
Zoe	Lindstrom	03/03	Celia	Wooster	03/16	Karla	Rodriguez	03/26
Daisy	Hernandez Carranza	03/04	Maria	Guerrero	03/16	Andrea	McGurk	03/26
Todd	Adams	03/04	Luisa	Medrano Reynoso	03/17	Leah	Tetz	03/27
Manuel	Tucker	03/04	Irma	Real	03/17	Sufyan	Sajjad	03/27
Rebecca	Cripe	03/04	Emily	Blair	03/18	Adam	Bordan	03/27
Dawn	Carolann	03/05	Carol	Pedraita	03/18	Janett	Garcia	03/27
Brandie	Lees	03/05	Melissa	Wilson	03/18	Grant	Garcia	03/28
Evelyn	Santos	03/05	Antoinette	Padgett	03/18	David	Wells	03/29
Samuel	Nigro	03/05	Amina	Alvarez	03/19	Joe	Mejia	03/29
Jennifer	Cruz	03/06	Dolores	Lopez Rios	03/20	Steven	Varela	03/29
Jennifer	Tate	03/06	Jena	Tuttle	03/20	Lisa	Murray	03/29
Julie	Antista	03/06	Jeffery	Padgett	03/20	Lynley	Ewen	03/29
Sara	Hardisty	03/06	Jonathan	Wilding	03/20	Thomas	Field	03/29
Madalyn	Faye	03/07	Jeffrey	Mahin	03/20	Christopher	McMullen	03/30
Stephanie	Uclaray	03/07	Dustin	Lucas	03/20	Jaryd	Padgett	03/30
Theresa	Miranda	03/07	Heather	Sowell	03/21	Nicole	Gannon	03/30
Diego	Bernal	03/07	Erik	Goble	03/21	Clinton	Jones	03/30
Stephen	Miller	03/08	Jennifer	Nickett	03/22	Thomas	Van	03/30
Joseph	Phillips	03/09	Riley	Gajdos	03/22	Peter	Madonna	03/31
Caroline	Fink	03/09	Jocelyn	Prieto-Garcia	03/22	Kristopher	Shaw	03/31
Vanessa	Knowlton	03/10	Elizabeth	Gonzalez	03/22	Mark	McCullough	03/31
Erin	Kelly	03/10	Ivy	Ramirez	03/23	Nancy	Sutton	03/31
Kelly	Lewis	03/10	Patricia	Zepeda	03/23			
Jeremiah	Hansen	03/10	Robert	Diaz	03/23			
Roxann	Davis	03/10	Mary	Hofmockel	03/23			
Samantha	Collins	03/10	Grace	Miller	03/23			
Gina	Forgette	03/11	Amy	Breschini	03/24			
David	Johnston	03/11	Cara	Taylor	03/24			
Thomas	Dillon	03/11	Michaela	Foster	03/24			
Margaret	Montgomery	03/12	Tammy	Brown	03/24			

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, March 18, 2026 @ 5:45pm.
Contact the SLOCEA office for the 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, March 10, 2026 @ 9:00 AM
Tuesday, March 24, 2026 @ 9:00 AM

SLOCREA Meetings
March 3, 2026. Contact SLOCREA for more information.

SLO County Pension Trust Board Of Trustees Meeting
Monday, March 30, 2026 @ 9:30 AM, BOS Chambers

