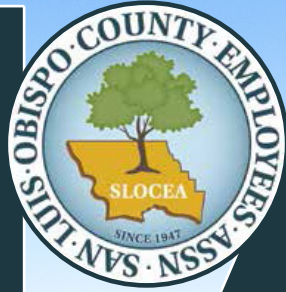


THE COUNTY

BLADE



VOLUME 41, NO. 4

APRIL 2026

EXPANDING MEMBER VALUE BENEFITS THROUGH AMBA ARE NOW AVAILABLE

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!



TELLING A STORY WITH MAPS!

RECOGNIZING ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY

PLACING THE GROWTH OF AI IN PERSPECTIVE

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

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PRESIDENT

Dept. of Social Services, Seat 1

Norma Domingo

VICE PRESIDENT

Public Health, Seat 2

Tim Faes

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Supervisory, Seat 3

B.U. #1 PUBLIC SERVICES UNIT

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Assessor's Office, Seat 7

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Public Services, Seat 9

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

VACANT

Seat 10

VACANT

Seat 11

B.U. #5 SUPERVISORY UNIT

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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

LOCSO, Seat 16

AT LARGE

Lucia Maceri

Clerk-Recorder, Seat 17

Ben Franco

Airports, Seat 18

VACANT

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

OFFICERS

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President

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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: Aerial view over Morrow Bay State Park.
Photo Credit: Thomas De Wever via iStock by Getty Images.

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

Expanding Member Value Benefits Through AMBA Are Now Available

Emily Landis,
Executive Director



Earlier this year, we shared that SLOCEA was partnering with AMBA (Association Member Benefits Advisors) to bring additional voluntary benefits and savings opportunities to our members. We're excited to announce that these programs are live and available, giving you access to a broader range of tools to support your financial security, health, and everyday expenses.

This partnership is designed to complement, not replace, your negotiated benefits, offering optional resources you can choose to use based on your individual needs.

NOW AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE OPTIONS

Even with employer-provided benefits, unexpected costs can arise quickly. AMBA's supplemental plans are designed to help bridge those gaps by providing financial support when you need it most.

Available options include:

- **Medical Transportation Protection** – Helps protect you from out-of-pocket expenses for emergency medical transportation
- **Hospital Indemnity Insurance** – Provides cash benefits for hospital stays
- **Long Term Care** – Helps pay for long-term care expenses and protect your assets
- **Hearing** – This no-cost program provides free hearing consultations and discounts on hearing aids at over 3,000 locations nationwide.

- **Whole Life Insurance** – Provides financial protection for your loved ones
- **Pet Insurance** – Coverage available for dogs, cats, birds and exotic pets through Nationwide.

These plans are completely voluntary and paid for directly by the enrolling members. You can choose the level of coverage that fits your household—or opt out entirely.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS AND SAVINGS PROGRAMS

In addition to insurance offerings, members now have access to a wide range of discount programs and everyday savings opportunities, including:

- Travel, hotels, and vacation packages
- Theme parks, movie tickets, and entertainment
- Electronics, shopping, and retail discounts
- Local and national brand offers
- Wellness and lifestyle services



These are designed to be immediately useful, helping to offset day-to-day costs while adding tangible value to your membership.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

This partnership reflects a broader goal: expanding the value of SLOCEA membership beyond the workplace.

We know that many of our members are navigating rising costs, family responsibilities, and financial uncertainty. While our core work remains focused on representation, bargaining, and protecting your rights on the job, this initiative allows us to also support members in more practical, everyday ways.

Through AMBA, you now have access to:

- Additional financial protection options
- Flexible, member-driven benefit choices
- Real savings opportunities you can use year-round

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

It's important to be clear about what this partnership does and does not do.

- Your County-provided benefits (medical, dental, vision, retirement) remain unchanged
- Your union contract and negotiated protections are unaffected

GETTING STARTED

Members can begin exploring available options and discounts now by visiting:

<https://www.myambabenefits.info/slocea>

We encourage you to take a few minutes to review what's available and determine whether any of these programs make sense for you or your family.

- SLOCEA's core mission—representation, advocacy, and enforcement—remains our priority. This is simply an added layer of optional support.

WHY SLOCEA PURSUED THIS PARTNERSHIP

As we continue to grow and evolve as an organization, we are always looking for ways to strengthen the overall value of membership.

This partnership allows us to:

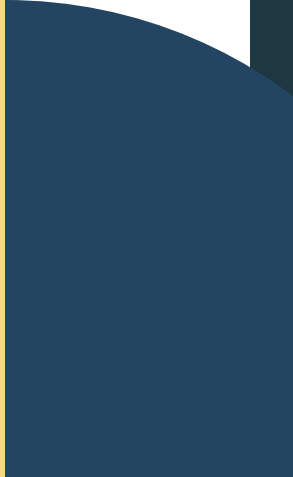
- Expand member benefits without impacting union resources
- Provide access to reputable, vetted programs
- Offer tools that help members manage real-world financial pressures

It's one more way we're working to support you—not just at work, but in your daily life.

QUESTIONS?

AMBA provides direct contact support for their plans and services! You can reach an AMBA agent Mon-Fri from 6:00AM – 4:00pm PST by calling 1-888-698-0972, or by using the contact form at the bottom of the benefits page linked above.

We'll continue to share updates, tips, and highlights as members begin using these programs.



GUIDE TO YOUR SLOCEA MEMBER BENEFITS



Long-Term Care

A Long-Term Care insurance policy can ease the financial burden on your loved ones helping to protect your life savings and reduce the stress on your spouse and children.



Cancer, Heart, and Stroke Insurance

Benefits paid directly to you. You select the benefit level that best suits your needs.



Emergency Air and Ground Transportation

Medical Access & Service Advantage (MASA®) provides plans for lifesaving emergency transportation services. Services are paid in full, with no deductibles, co-pays, or dollar limits.



Tax-Deferred Asset Protection

Tax-deferred accumulation of interest for qualified or non-qualified funds with the ability to participate in market gains. No underwriting required.



Medicare Solutions

Medicare Supplement plans not only help pay for additional eligible expenses not paid by Original Medicare, they provide the freedom for you to use your own physician, specialist, and medical facility. Not connected with or endorsed by the U.S. Government or the Federal Medicare Program.



Whole Life

With no premium increases, or reduced coverage due to age or health once issued, this policy can help protect your family from the high cost of final expenses.



Hospital Indemnity

A supplemental hospital indemnity insurance policy could be a smart financial decision for other hospital expenses including extended hospital stays, emergency room visits, ambulance transportation and more.

GET YOUR BENEFITS NOW!

With San Luis Obispo County Employees Association (SLOCEA), you have access to exceptional member benefits. Are you wondering if certain benefits are right for you?
Contact us for a free benefits review!

866.619.6463 | myAMBAbenefits.info/SLOCEA

CA Insurance License #0I96562
In CA d/b/a Association Member Benefits & Insurance Agency

YOUR INSIGHT TO SAVINGS



myAMBAdiscounts

THOUSANDS OF SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES!



myAMBAdiscounts

myAMBAdiscounts gives membership even more value. Explore thousands of savings opportunities in dining, event tickets, clothes, health, travel & many other discounts nationwide.

ADDITIONAL MEMBER DISCOUNTS:

Start Hearing, Inc.

Start Hearing, Inc. offers members a complete hearing evaluation, warranty on digital technology aids in any style, loss and damage protection, and batteries with a complete benefit package.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact us at 888.200.5701 or visit us online at www.starhearing.com/partners/amba.

Legal Services

Protect yourself and your family with a legal services plan. Like many people, you may need legal assistance sooner rather than later. You'll want a lawyer you can trust at the right price. Members can access a nationwide network of attorneys for a low monthly cost with no copays, deductibles, or claim forms. <https://legalplan.metlife.com/amba>

Identity & Fraud Protection

Our world continues to become increasingly connected to the Internet. While this can be incredibly convenient, it also puts some things that matter most to you at risk, such as your identity, money and assets, family, reputation, and privacy. That's where ID Protection comes in. An all-in-one digital safety net for you and your whole family includes credit monitoring, military-grade encryption, and insurance protection to help cover any eligible losses and fees due to ID theft and fraud. <https://offer.aura.com/amba>

Proliability

Inclusive and affordable professional liability coverage for different professions in the medical, educational, and business fields brought to you by Proliability, powered by AMBA proliability.com

BENEFITS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH



Some benefits not available in all states. Association membership required to obtain benefits. Some associations have made a special benefits website available to their members. Register at myAMBAbenefits.info.

Updated 03/2026

Recognizing Administrative Professionals Day

By Brooke Daphne
Labor Representative II



Each year, Administrative Professionals Day offers an opportunity to recognize the essential contributions of administrative staff across our workplaces. From coordinating operations and managing communications to supporting both staff and community members, administrative

professionals play a critical role in keeping our organizations running smoothly.

Their work often happens behind the scenes, but its impact is felt everywhere. Administrative professionals are frequently the first point of contact, the steady organizers in times of change, and the individuals who help ensure that daily operations remain efficient and responsive. Their knowledge, adaptability, and professionalism are vital to maintaining strong and effective workplaces.

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the administrative professionals serving the County of San Luis Obispo. Your dedication to public service strengthens our community every day. Whether supporting critical county operations, assisting the public, or helping departments function effectively, your work is

foundational to the services our residents rely on. Your commitment, professionalism, and resilience do not go unnoticed.

This day is not only about appreciation, but also about acknowledgment of the value of administrative work. It is important that recognition extends beyond a single day and is reflected in fair working conditions, respect, and meaningful inclusion in workplace decisions.

We encourage everyone to take a moment to thank the administrative professionals in your workplace and to recognize the important role they play in supporting both staff and the communities we serve.



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 Domingo

BU 13 - San Luis Obispo
Accounting Technician

Elizabeth Farrington

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo
Public Health
Microbiologist I

Kelsey Quetsch

BU 01 - San Luis Obispo
Environmental Health
Specialist I

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.*

Telling A Story With Maps! Spotlight On ITD's GIS Program

Carrie McGrath,
*Labor
Representative I*



This month, we had the opportunity to sit down with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analyst III Allen Dailey from the Information Technology Department (ITD) to learn more about the important work happening behind the scenes to support county services.

Allen's path to GIS began with a love for geology and maps. After interning with the County, he officially joined the team full time in 2020. His journey is a unique one, having transitioned from a career as a college English professor to a GIS Analyst.

If you are wondering, as we were, GIS is a powerful tool used across industries including utilities, transportation, major corporations, and government agencies. At its core, GIS combines data with geography to help tell a story and solve real-world problems.

Within the county, GIS plays a critical role across multiple departments, with GIS analysts in the Agriculture Department, the Assessor's Office, Environmental Health, ITD, Planning and Building, and Public Works.

The ITD GIS team also provides support to a variety of departments, including Sheriff dispatch, Social Services, elections and redistricting, parcel mapping and property assessments, road maintenance, and health inspections, as well as collaboration with Cal Poly, Cuesta, and individual city agencies in SLO County.

One recent example of GIS in



action comes from the Public Health Department, which used GIS mapping to identify the most effective locations for outreach to eligible food bank recipients. This type of data-driven approach ensures services reach the communities that need them most.

Allen also maintains a web map for the county's In-Home Support Services (IHSS) workers within the Department of Social Services.

The map displays the locations of all their clients. In emergency situations, such as wildfire, staff can use the map to quickly identify clients' home locations and generate a list of those within an evacuation zone. This allows staff to respond efficiently and assist clients with evacuation if needed. As a result, the map plays a critical role in ensuring the safety of county



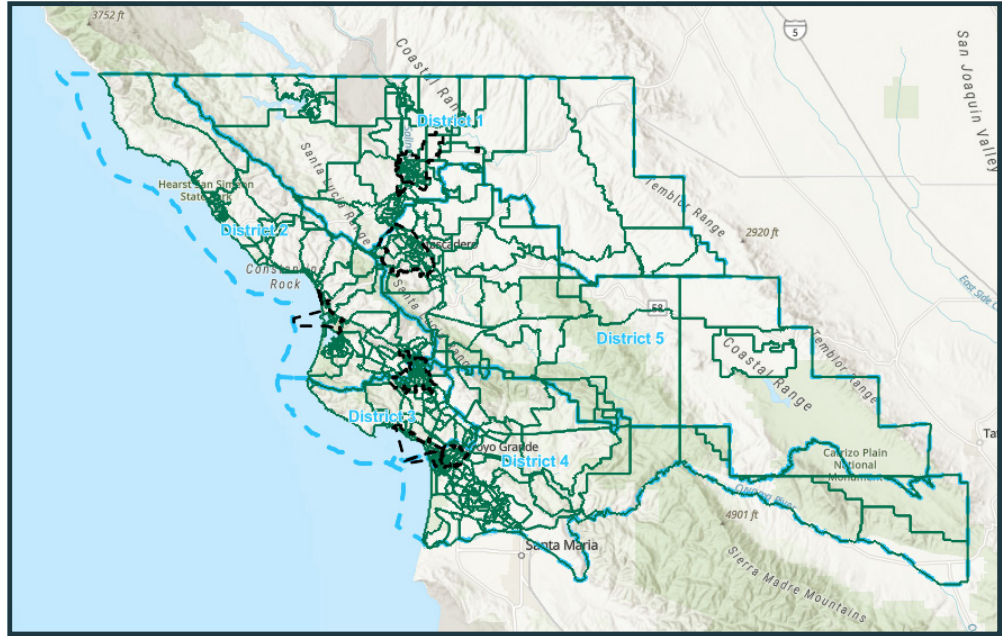
residents who rely on in-home support services.

Each November, the GIS team participates in an international event to highlight how GIS is used locally by government, academic, and private industry professionals. This year GIS Day will be held on November 18 at the San Luis Obispo Library. Be sure to drop in and see how GIS is being used in the county.

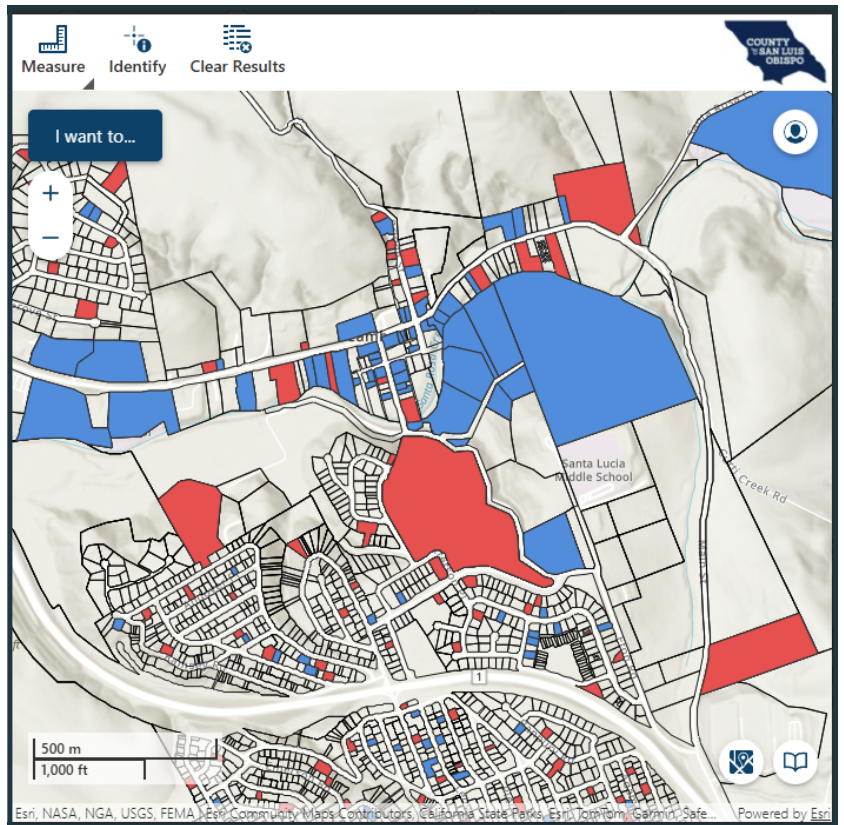
For Allen, one of the most rewarding aspects of his role is the creative side of map design. He enjoys working with color, layout, and the visual elements that bring a map to life. Outside of work, he continues to pursue his passion by creating a watercolor style map of the Morro Bay Estuary using GIS software. Allen is especially drawn to the balance between artistry and technical skill, combining graphic design with the programming, coding, and database development that power GIS. For him, coding offers a creative challenge, with a clear goal to build something meaningful and functional.

The value of GIS to our county cannot be overstated. The ITD team manages the GIS program and infrastructure that supports the entire organization, while also assisting departments with software, troubleshooting, and implementation. Their work ensures that data is not only collected but transformed into meaningful insights that benefit the community every day.

From mapping critical services to designing visually compelling representations of our region, Allen Dailey and the ITD GIS team are helping shape smarter, more connected communities; one map at a time.



(Above) Precinct View, County of San Luis Obispo Clerk Recorder.



(Above) Business License View Map of licensed businesses in the unincorporated areas of SLO County

SHARE YOUR STORY!

If you or your team would like to be featured in the Blade to highlight your county job, please reach out to Carrie McGrath or Jennifer Tate at SLOCEA. We would love to share your story!

Placing The Growth Of AI In Perspective

Jennifer Tate,
Labor
Representative I



As someone who recently expanded my own use of artificial intelligence (AI), I recently came across an ominous article suggesting the technology could replace large portions of white-collar work. The article examined new research from the AI company Anthropic on how the technology might affect professional jobs.

As you might expect, the internet responded quickly. LinkedIn threads filled with predictions about the collapse of entire professions, while Reddit discussions questioned whether degrees in business, law, or computer science would soon be obsolete.

But panic in the face of new technology is not new. Whether or not it reflects what we see in our own workplaces, the conversation about AI and the future of work is now happening everywhere.

EARLIER TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTIONS

One notable example is the Luddite movement in early nineteenth-century England. Textile workers destroyed mechanized looms because they believed machines would eliminate their livelihoods. Yet the long-term result was not the disappearance of work. Mechanization expanded production, lowered costs, and increased demand. As the textile industry grew, so did employment, creating new roles for operators, mechanics, and engineers.

A similar fear resurfaced in the twentieth century when computers entered offices. Many believed clerical workers and bookkeepers would disappear once calculations and record-keeping became automated. Instead, computers increased the amount of information organizations could process. Rather than shrinking office work, they expanded it, giving rise to roles in data management, systems administration, and analysis.

History suggests that transformative technologies rarely eliminate work entirely. More often, they change the type of work people do.

BACK TO THE PRESENT

The warning about a potential “white-collar recession” did not come from a neutral observer. It came from Anthropic, a company at the forefront of developing advanced AI systems. The researchers themselves note that current adoption represents only a fraction of what the technology is theoretically capable of performing in the workplace. The study offers a useful snapshot of current use, even if long-term implications remain uncertain.

That does not mean the analysis is incorrect. But companies building transformative technology tend to emphasize its potential impact. That perspective is useful, but it is only one way of interpreting what these tools may ultimately mean for the labor market.

According to the report, fields such as management, finance, technology, legal, and administrative work could face significant disruption. In contrast, manual labor and trades are described as relatively insulated.

This reflects a shift in the narrative. For decades, automation was expected to replace manual labor. Now the conversation suggests office work may be more exposed.

THE WORK ITSELF

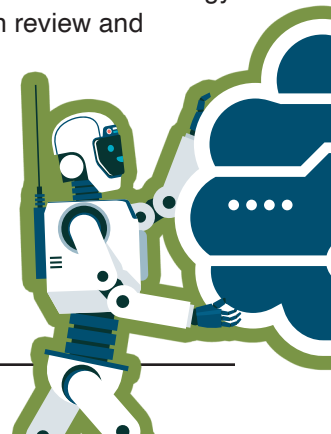
AI systems excel at processing large amounts of information and performing structured, repeatable tasks such as summarizing documents, drafting routine communications, and organizing data. These are useful capabilities, but they are also typically the most routine components of professional work.

The value of many roles lies not in repetition, but in interpreting information, applying judgment, and making decisions in ambiguous situations.

If routine tasks are increasingly handled by AI, the structure of many jobs may shift rather than disappear. Professionals may spend less time gathering and formatting information and more time interpreting complex issues, making decisions, coordinating across teams, and communicating outcomes.

This may be particularly true in government and public institutions, where regulatory requirements, transparency standards, and accountability make rapid automation more difficult. Even where technology is adopted, human review and judgment remain central.

If AI handles more routine tasks, the skills that remain uniquely human become more valuable.



THE HUMAN ADVANTAGE

For decades, technical expertise was seen as the primary qualification, while communication and interpersonal abilities were often considered optional. But as technology takes on more structured work, employees are increasingly valued for skills such as communication, emotional intelligence, adaptability, collaboration, and judgment. Unlike technical tools, these skills cannot be downloaded or automated. They are developed gradually through years of human interaction, lived experience, mistakes, and professional judgment.

Entry-level roles have traditionally included many routine tasks that AI can now perform quickly. That does not necessarily mean those jobs disappear. More often, it means the structure of early-career work changes.

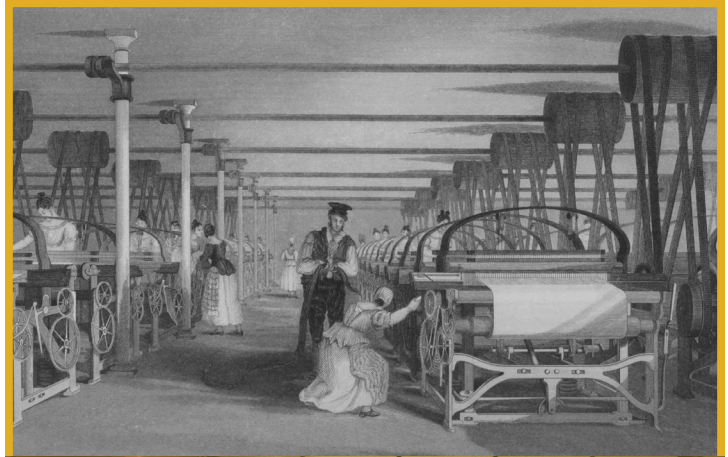
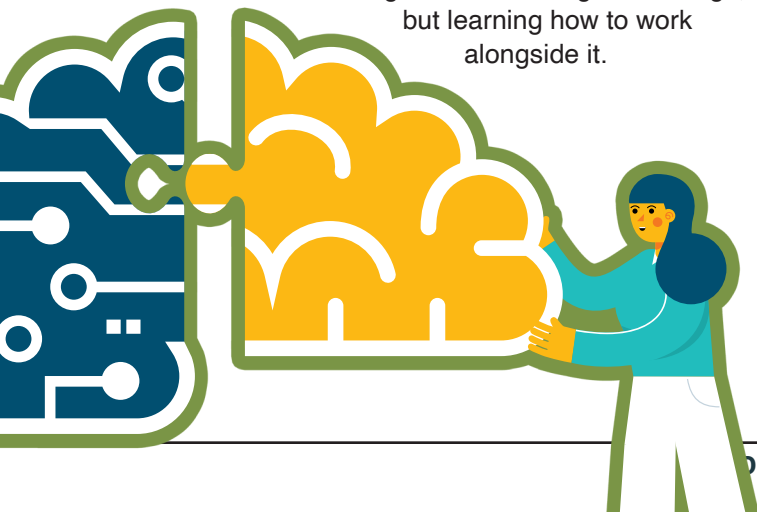
Instead of focusing primarily on repetitive tasks, employees may spend more time learning systems, reviewing outputs, and understanding how their organization functions. Technology may assist with routine steps, but someone still needs to recognize when something is wrong, interpret results, and decide what to do next. Those are professional skills that still depend on human judgment.

A MORE REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Artificial intelligence will almost certainly change how many jobs are performed. Some tasks will disappear and others will become easier. Entirely new roles will likely emerge. But history suggests that technological revolutions rarely eliminate work altogether. Instead, they reshape what work looks like.

For many employees, especially in public service roles, the most valuable abilities will remain the ones technology cannot replace: sound judgment, clear communication, and the ability to navigate complex systems and human relationships. AI may change the tools we use, but it does not replace the responsibility people carry in doing the work.

The future of work will evolve, as it always has. The challenge is not avoiding that change, but learning how to work alongside it.



(Top) Power-loom weaving, 1835.
Photo public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

(Middle) Office workers in the 1972.
Photo public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

(Bottom) Modern office collaboration.
Photo by Kindel Media, via Pexels.

The Summer Childcare Program Is Back!



County Benefits Team

Managing work and childcare during the summer can be challenging. SLOCEA's Summer Childcare Program offers financial assistance to eligible employees to help offset summer childcare costs, providing added support while children are cared for during the workday.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Summer Childcare Program is a reimbursement initiative designed to assist SLOCEA members with summer childcare expenses for school aged children under 14 years old. Eligible participants may receive reimbursement for summer childcare services from an approved, local provider of their choice.

COMMON PROVIDERS INCLUDE:

- YMCA
- SLCUSD Sun 'n' Fun
- Boys and Girls Club
- Licensed childcare providers

Note: Family members providing babysitting services are not eligible for reimbursement.

DATES AND DEADLINES

- Application Period: April 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026
- Reimbursement Period: June 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026*

*Reimbursement period may be extended on a month-by-month basis, but no later than December 31, 2026.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about this program, please contact SLOCEA at (805) 543-2021 or email bdickey@slocea.org.

APPLICATION

Please visit our [Summer Childcare website](#) for the program details, application, and reimbursement forms.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

This program is available to permanent employees, working 20 or more hours per week in the following Bargaining Units:

- BU 01: Public Services
- BU 02: Traders, Crafts, and Services Unit
- BU 05: Supervisory Unit
- BU 11: Confidential
- BU 13: Clerical Unit

In addition to being in an eligible bargaining unit, your gross family income will be verified by providing your 2025 tax return.

The 2026 Summer Childcare Reimbursement Program



Camp



COUNTY
OF SAN LUIS
OBISPO

Daycare



sports



Recreation



LEARN
MORE!

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JUNE 30

How it Works

- Submit an application to the SLOCEA office **before June 30th**
- Select **your choice** of qualifying childcare program
- **Enroll your child** and pay the fees
- Submit a **Claim Form** with your **original receipt**
- **Receive reimbursement** for a portion of your costs!*

*Subject to full program guidelines.



Eligibility Requirements

- Open to County employees in **Bargaining Units 01, 02, 05, 11, & 13**
- **Must be a permanent employee** working a minimum of 20 hours/week
- Children **under 14** enrolled in a qualifying program
- 2025 gross annual family income **below \$150,000**



Questions? Call today!

805-543-2021 | bdickey@slocea.org

SLOCEA.org

Full program guidelines can be found on
SLOCEA's website, SLOCEA.org
..or scan the QR code!

SLOCREA Presenter Spotlights Local History

Vita Miller,
*SLOCREA Vice-
President*



In this article
I will share a
condensed

version of the talk given by John Ashbaugh, former history professor, SLO Planning Commissioner and 2 term City Council member, as well as founder of the SLO County Land Conservancy, as the guest speaker at the March SLOCREA in-person meeting at the Elks Lodge in SLO.

John describes himself as a story-teller who found his writing to be therapeutic and loves volunteer work as a Docent at Mission San Luis Obispo.

This is meant to share the interesting nature of the SLOCREA meetings with speakers, which are held three times annually.

Two other meetings are a July picnic and December holiday party with entertainment. See www.slocrea.org for more information.

John's presentation featured the story of a remarkable woman, Ramona Maria Le Luz Carrillo de Pacheco de Wilson. It's a story that everyone who lives in San Luis Obispo should know. Ramona Drive that parallels Foothill Boulevard is named for her; Pacheco Elementary is named for her more-famous son, Romualdo Pacheco Jr.

The complete version also touched on two other contemporary Spanish women of exceptional elegance: Maria Josefa Carrillo de Dana, who lived in the Dana Adobe in Nipomo, and Maria Concepcion Boronda de

“

John's presentation featured the story of a remarkable woman, Ramona Maria Le Luz Carrillo de Pacheco de Wilson. It's a story that everyone who lives in San Luis Obispo should know.

”

Delissegues de Munoz, who lived most of her adult life in SLO but later moved to Nipomo to be close to two of her daughters - each of whom married one of Señora Dana's sons. Longtime residents of SLO County are familiar with these names.

John also spoke about an early priest at Mission San Luis Obispo, Fr. Luis Antonio Martinez, the longest serving priest in the entire 254 year history of our mission:

That story concerns a Spanish-born Franciscan priest with a wry sense of humor and an abiding loyalty to the Spanish Crown. Throw in a dashing and handsome young Lieutenant with a gorgeous and gracious wife. Set them as unwilling but compliant pawns in a game played by a cruel cabal of oppressors in the Presidio.

Members also enjoyed a slide show with photos of these characters including historical photos of adobes mentioned in the talk, all preceded by a very tasty hot buffet.

The May speaker will be Katie Girardi who presents an annual update of the SLO County Pension Trust including data that informs us of the status and viability of our pension system.

That will be on May 5th at the Madonna Inn which includes a hot luncheon buffet.

Members are encouraged to suggest speakers that will engage the interest of the group. You will want to be a part of these meetings when retirement arrives and I encourage you to be an active member to keep the organization functioning for the benefit of all. Have a fantastic Spring.

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



ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP 2026

[CLICK HERE](#)
for the
Application

ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

- SLOCEA awards up to \$13,000 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

1. Applications are available on SLOCEA's website under "Membership Benefits"
2. Write a one-page essay describing your community service and academic/vocational goals
3. Obtain a copy of High School transcripts
4. Obtain two letters of reference addressed to "Scholarship Committee"
5. 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 15th



805-543-2021



bdickey@slocea.org



SLOCEA.org

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.**



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.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Learning & Development Center Newsletter
April Blade 2026

CONGRATULATIONS S.T.A.R.T. GRADUATES



AVAILABLE CLASSES

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO ENROLL IN UPCOMING CLASSES

- Learning Roundtable - Setting Goals that Drive Results - April 9th - 10:00am-12:00pm
- Supervisor Essentials - April 16th - 12:30pm-4:30pm
- Red Cross Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED - April 17th - 9:30am-12:00pm
- Red Cross Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED - April 17th - 1:00pm-3:30pm

Webinars

[EAP Webinar - Career Development Strategies - April 23rd - 1:00pm](#)

Supervisor's Introduction to Risk Management Classes

Please [click here](#) to sign up!

LDC IS OFFERING STRENGTHS COACHING

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SIGN UP!





March's Find Feathers Winners!



1. Daniel Liddell - Sheriff-Coroner
2. Rebecca Drake- District Attorney
3. Melissa Hamann - Agricultural Coordinator
4. Cynthia Todd - Dept Social Services
5. Ezmeralda Cantu Smith - Public Health

IMPORTANT INFORMATION & LINKS TO KNOW



Survivor's Endowment Grant

Attorney Referral List SLOCEA Legal Services Program

AMBA Discounts

As a SLOCEA member, enjoy exclusive discounts on travel, electronics, household items, entertainment & dining, and more!

**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 similar to a beneficiary for 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 DocuSign
- 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 the person you wish to receive the grant)	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**

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 10775 Grand Avenue, Santa Barbara, CA 93108 Phone: 805-498-4884 Email: deborah@dbcpc.com	Stalberg & Tatum 710 Santa Rosa St., Santa Rosa, CA 95405 Phone: 805-444-9416 Email: info@stalbergtatum.com
Law Office of Stephen M. Stone, PC 1117 Pine Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 Phone: 805-444-6207 Email: stephen@stephenstone.com	Spaulding & Grant 710 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 Phone: 805-543-6100 Email: info@slocealaw.com

Click here to download the list

Click here to get started!

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



April 26 International Pretzel Day



Fun Facts about soft pretzels:

- "Tying the Knot": The phrase originates from a Swiss tradition where newlyweds break a pretzel to wish for good luck.
- The largest soft pretzel on record weighed 842 pounds and measured 26.8 feet long.
- During the Middle Ages, pretzels were considered good luck, a symbol of prosperity, and a long life.
- In Germany, giant soft pretzels (or Brezeln) are staples, often served alongside cheese spreads.
- Until the 1930s, all pretzels were made by hand, skilled bakers able to twist 40 per minute.
- Over 80% of America's pretzels are made in Pennsylvania.
- Unsalted soft pretzels are affectionately nicknamed "baldies".

**Did You Know We're
On Social Media?
Follow Us Here!**



your_slocea



SLOCEA



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

Service Anniversaries & New Members

The following County, Courts and LOCSD employees will reach a significant service anniversary during the month of APRIL. 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!

APRIL SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

First Name	Last Name	Department	Years Of Service	First Name	Last Name	Department	Years Of Service
Maria	Guerrero	Department Social Services	32	James	Griley	Public Works	19
Nancy	Sutherland	District Attorney	30	Cristina	Cantu	Public Health	19
Karen	Locker	Sheriff-Coroner	28	Jeremiah	Hansen	Parks	16
Elizabeth	McKenzie	Library	28	Angela	Atwell	Behavioral Health	15
Elvia	Torres	Department Social Services	28	Melissa	Perez	Behavioral Health	15
Michael	Johnson	Public Works	25	Kristina	Paramore	Behavioral Health	15
Kristin	Edler	Public Health	24	Michelle	Bechard	Department Social Services	10
Claudia	Perez	Library	24	Valerie	Amador	Department Social Services	10
Adam	Bordan	Public Works	24	Maria	Aquino-Anda	Behavioral Health	10
Brandon	Silver	Department Social Services	24	Jenny	Williamson	Public Works	10
John	Oles	Parks	22	Benjamin	Adames	Public Works	10
Vanessa	Lopez	Department Social Services	21	Cynthia	Wakefield	Behavioral Health	10
Samantha	Fleming	Department Social Services	21	Chelsea	Hendron	Assessor	5
Morgan	Brockman	Parks	21	Mary	Marzano	Department Social Services	5
Keith	Williams	Department Social Services	20				

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Name	Department	Name	Department
Taylor Barnette	Behavioral Health	Miguel Padilla Garcia	Department Social Services
Ike Wilder	Behavioral Health	Jennifer McGuire	District Attorney
Luis Mendoza-Luna	Department Social Services	Avalon Hatcher	Health Agency
Molly Maguire	Department Social Services	Tony Herrera	Parks
Jazmin Zarate	Department Social Services	Christopher Samano	Public Works

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 APRIL BIRTHDAYS!

First Name Last Name	Birthday	First Name Last Name	Birthday	First Name Last Name	Birthday
Annette Sheely	04/01	John Love	04/12	Cuauhtemoc Flores	04/22
Gloria Amaya	04/01	Allen Fois	04/12	Melissa Niver	04/22
Shannon Brown	04/01	Michael Blakely	04/13	Erica Mora	04/22
Rosana Esparza	04/01	Araceli Solorio	04/13	Joe Blakewell	04/22
Michelle Zulim-Clark	04/01	Eric Zatt	04/13	Jakelyn Llamas Meza	04/22
Mark Ayler	04/02	Catherine Sandstrom	04/13	Donald Davis	04/23
Paulina Flores Jimenez	04/02	Savannah Donovan	04/13	Paul Hoffman	04/23
Sondra Stambolian	04/03	Maria Gutierrez Castaneda	04/14	George Sakkas	04/23
Genny Torres	04/03	Chloe Brown	04/14	Brian Whetsler	04/23
Haidy Dykhouse	04/03	Amy Allen	04/14	Mathew Ptacek	04/24
Teruyo McMullen	04/04	Mary Marzano	04/14	Farren Francisco	04/24
Nikia Wade	04/04	Randy Reddell	04/14	Gina Herbst	04/24
Christine Childs	04/04	Faith Zenker	04/14	Evelyn Chavez	04/25
Joshua Rovenstine	04/04	Kameron Atnip	04/14	Kathleen Welles	04/25
Sally Bidleman	04/04	Stacey Maldonado	04/15	Melissa Hill	04/26
David Manriquez	04/06	Micah Benevedo	04/15	Kevin Sulitz	04/26
Pamela Moore	04/06	Jason Boardman	04/15	Shannon Quake	04/26
Corissa Burnett	04/06	Allyson Milburn	04/15	Marisa Cervantes	04/26
Jose Lozano	04/06	Brandon Silver	04/15	Michelle Brown-Silva	04/26
Ryan Monie	04/06	Marta Jandreau	04/16	Brandon Robinson	04/26
Jennifer Castaneda	04/06	Nicole Harrison	04/17	Yeshenia Galvez	04/27
Margherita Lebsack	04/06	Kelly Gonzalez	04/17	Ana Solis	04/27
James Griley	04/07	Jessica Hall	04/18	Keith Williams	04/28
Valerie Amador	04/08	John Soderlund	04/19	Maria Diaz	04/28
Megan Frauenheim	04/08	Michael Ceniseroz	04/19	Mitchel Hanscom	04/29
Mitchell Wallravin	04/08	Samantha Brown	04/19	Monica Lemelle	04/29
Jordan Garbayo	04/08	Carla Abraham	04/19	Lara Laity	04/29
Matthew Mohle	04/09	Marlys Santamarina	04/19	Carolyn Andersen	04/30
Journey Borum	04/10	Teri Hallett	04/19	Madeleine Pechner	04/30
Lane Sutherland	04/10	Jovani Ramirez	04/20	Lisa Donnahoo	04/30
Jonathan Quake	04/11	Cody Brindley	04/20		
Marlon Jamison	04/11	Samantha Fleming	04/20		
Aubree Kinkade	04/11	Kerstin Hewitt	04/20		
Sandra Smythe Carlson	04/11	April Sears	04/21		
Lorelei Dumaplin	04/11	Laine Bauer	04/21		
Nicolette Littler	04/11	Gricel Mendoza	04/21		
Pamela Hood	04/11	Andrew Souza	04/21		
Casey Storton	04/12	Catherine Del Biaggio	04/22		
Arya Jones	04/12	Carol Gilmer	04/22		

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, April 15, 2026 @ 5:45pm.
 In-person @ the SLOCEA Office

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, April 7, 2026 @ 9:00 AM
 Tuesday, April 21, 2026 @ 9:00 AM

SLOCREA Meetings
 April is a non-meeting month.
SLO County Pension Trust Board Of Trustees Meeting
 April in a non-meeting month



