

MODESTO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Progress

VOL. 46 | ISSUE 04 | APRIL 2025



Cart 1

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Shop Greater Modesto, Online

Shop from the comfort of your own home while supporting small businesses in the greater Modesto, California region.

Seasonal Highlights

Trending categories for this season.

St. Patrick's Day Lucky Finds

Tiny Trends

Hop into Easter

Spring Refresh

- ▶ **SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
- ▶ **TRI COUNTIES BANK**
- ▶ **LLOYDS OF LA LUNA**

Wedding day was
absolutely perfect
sun
love
Geo
and



↑
our first home

Your partner in every milestone.

We're not just a bank, we're a partner. For nearly 160 years, we've helped our customers turn dreams into reality. From opening a bank account and saving for college to buying a home or starting a business, we are here to support you through all of life's milestones. Connect with us to learn how we can help you turn your most important moments into a lifetime of memories.



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• 1940

• 1945

• 1950

• 1955

• 1960

• 1965



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At the Modesto Chamber of Commerce, we believe that a vibrant and thriving community is built on the pillars of community, advocacy, strong relationships, education, and service. We are proud to recognize schools that excel in closing achievement gaps and equipping learners with the essential skills needed to be successful in the workforce and in life.



Trish Christensen
President & CEO
Modesto Chamber of Commerce

Presented by:



CEO Message

BUSINESS, THE ENGINE OF SOCIETY....

As spring unfolds, bringing with it renewed energy and optimism, we turn our attention to the vital contributors to our local economy: the small businesses and entrepreneurs of Modesto and Stanislaus County. These individuals are not just business owners; they are innovators and the hard workers shaping our community's future.

This edition of Progress magazine is dedicated to celebrating the resilience and creativity of our business community, small, entrepreneurial, to large who continuously adapt to the evolving business landscape with courage and ingenuity.

Our small businesses embody the dreams of our community members, serve as key job providers, and contribute uniquely to the cultural and economic vitality of our area.

We are excited to share stories across various industries and interests who are launching cutting-edge products to running family-run establishments that form the backbone of our neighborhoods. These narratives showcase the breadth and depth of our entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Furthermore, we highlight the resources that the Modesto Chamber of Commerce and our partners provide to support these businesses. From workshops and networking opportunities to strategic partnerships, we are committed to fostering an environment where local businesses can thrive.

Let's all make a concerted effort to support our local entrepreneurs, whether by choosing to shop local, referring their services, or simply stopping by to show encouragement. Every small gesture contributes to a stronger community.

Together, we will continue to champion the entrepreneurial spirit that thrives in Modesto and Stanislaus County, fostering growth and prosperity for all.

- Business drives innovation, creates opportunities, and builds the foundations of community prosperity. When we support business, we uplift our entire society.

With warm regards,

Trish

WHY JOIN THE MODESTO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

Each member of the Chamber is important, no matter the size of business. We desire for local businesses and organizations to succeed and thrive. To reach this goal we provide exposure, opportunities to engage with Regional Electeds and community partners, as well as networking with businesses and organizations across industries. We work to better our community by providing up-to-date education and training, certifying qualifying businesses as Green, and providing advocacy on City, State, and Federal levels. The Chamber is a family of dedicated professionals striving to make a difference in their business and way of life. Whatever your business needs are, we invite you to join us.

To execute our adopted mission we have developed an acronym that helps keep us focused. That acronym is **“CARES: Community, Advocacy, Relationships, Education and Service.”**

C - Community

At its heart, the Modesto Chamber is a community of like-minded business owners who share the vision for enjoying a thriving economy and creating and maintaining our community as a vibrant place to live, work and play. With over 100 years of history and experience in the Greater Modesto Area, we understand what it means to be a business owner and customer in our community, with featured events such as local and regional forums, Ag Aware, Harvest Luncheon, and Family Day. Chamber members get the opportunity to actively engage in and influence the community they live and work in.

A - Advocacy

The Modesto Chamber supports local businesses and is an active advocate for the common interest of its members.

The Chamber has an Economic Development Committee and a Government Relations Council. These advocacy committees are dedicated and proactive in representing our members and community. They work to address business initiatives and relieve the regulatory burdens businesses face may face. The Chamber is also honored to certify local businesses and organizations through our California Green Business Network Stanislaus Program. Through this we create more conscientious and sustainable ways of life while lowering the cost of doing business for our community and future generations.

R - Relationships

The Modesto Chamber of Commerce specializes in building relationships and serving as the nexus to businesses, nonprofit organizations, and governmental agencies. With over a dozen Committees, Programs, and Events in which our members can participate, the Chamber offers ample opportunity to meet and connect with other business owners in our community. As a relational organization, the Chamber works with its members to ensure the opportunity to connect and grow in every niche and industry to help build and cultivate long-lasting relationships among business owners and community partners alike.

E - Education

The Modesto Chamber of Commerce values education and offers members the opportunity to stay on the leading edge with new and emerging information and training that will set your business apart from the rest. In partnership with Modesto Junior College, the Chamber is pleased to offer an assortment of trainings applicable to any business or industry for credited completion through our Chamber University platform. Our Chamber also works with members to provide a platform to speak to their own industry expertise and invite other members to learn from those leading our local industries.

S - Service

The Modesto Chamber of Commerce offers its members a wide range of opportunities to promote and engage their business across industry and community lines. The Chamber Weekly E-Blast, Website, and our Progress Magazine provide opportunities to advertise and promote your business, keep up to date with articles about local businesses in our community, and stay in the loop about up-and-coming Chamber and community events. Our Chamber also offers in-demand materials, such as Member contact list, Federal and State compliance posters, export document services, and so much more. Chamber members can also personalize their business profile within our website and have access to our Member-Only Information Center, where members can connect with other members, boost their social media presence, promote job postings, public events, and member-to-member discounts.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Modesto Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to serving the greater Modesto Area, regional businesses and community prosperity through advocacy, collaboration, access to leaders, economic development, connectivity and business education.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson - Patricia Gillum, Pat Gillum CPA
Immediate Past Chairman -
Kirstie Boyett, Independent
Vice Chairman, Internal Operations, Treasurer -
Dejeune Shelton, Modesto Junior College
Vice Chairman, External Operations -
John Villines, Modesto Gospel Mission
Vice Chairman, Membership Growth and Retention -
Bill Robinson, Principal Financial

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Laura Ward, Ward Promotional Marketing Solutions

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APRIL 2025 | CONTENTS

COMMUNITY

- 4 CEO MESSAGE
- 7 CALENDAR
- 8 ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 10 SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAMS
- 12 GROWTH IN THE VALLEY
- 13 BE YOU YOGA AND AYURVEDA

ADVOCACY

- 14 AG AWARE
- 15 EDD JOB FAIR

RELATIONSHIPS

- 16 WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
- 17 PRESIDENT'S CLUB
- 18 THE JOURNEY OF KAYSHAUN BROOKS
- 19 CULTIVATING DIGITAL IMPACT
- 20 MILESTONES

EDUCATION

- 21 A DAY WITH PUBLIC SAFETY
- 22 LEVERAGING AI

SERVICE

- 23 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

DISCLAIMER: The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Modesto Chamber of Commerce.

PROGRESS MAGAZINE

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CHAMBER CALENDAR

APRIL

- 1** **Rising Professionals Evening Social**
Time: 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM
D'Forno Cocina
- 2** **Economic Development Committee**
Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: 1114 J St, Modesto, CA 95354
- 4** **Ribbon Cutting: English Oaks Nursing & Rehabilitation Center 40th Anniversary**
Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Location: 2633 W Rumble Rd, Modesto, CA 95350
- 9** **EDD Job Fair**
Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Location: Modesto Centre Plaza
10001 K St., Modesto, CA, 95354
- 12** **Ribbon Cutting: Camp Jack Hazard Grand Opening**
Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Location: TBD
- 17** **AG Aware Modesto City Schools FFA Scholarship Fundraising Luncheon**
Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: MJC ACE Ag Pavilion
Register at: bit.ly/3EuEgt3
- 17** **Women in Business Evening Social**
Time: 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Cora at Roseburg Square
- 18** **Ambassador / Welcome Team Meeting**
Time: 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
Location: 1114 J Street, Modesto CA (Modesto Chamber of Commerce Conference Room)
- 18** **Government Relations Council**
Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: 1114 J St, Modesto CA, 95354
Speaker: TBA
Topic: TBA
- 23** **Ribbon Cutting: Truewood by Merrill Three Year Anniversary**
Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Location: 3420 Shawnee Drive, Modesto CA, 95350
- 24** **Central Valley Real Estate Summit**
Time: 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Location: Modesto Center Plaza
Register: <https://business.modchamber.org/events/details/central-valley-real-estate-summit-2025-11132>
- 26** **Ribbon Cutting: Modesto Children's Garden Grand Opening**
Time: 11:00 AM
Location: Corner of S Carpenter Rd and California Ave, Modesto CA

MAY

- 1** **Multi Chamber Mixer: Riverbank**
Time: 5:30 AM – 7:30 PM
Location: TBD
- 2** **Economic Development Committee**
Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: 1114 J St, Modesto, CA 95354
Speaker: Todd Aaronson, Visit Modesto
Topic: Update on Local Tourism
- 3** **Member Market Day**
Time: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Location: Modesto Centre Plaza
1000 L St., Modesto CA, 95354
Register: <https://business.modchamber.org/events/details/member-market-day-2025-11126>
- 6** **Rising Professionals – Business Brew**
Time: 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
Location: TBD
Register:
- 7** **Economic Development Committee**
Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: 1114 J St, Modesto, CA 95354
- 8** **Member Mix & Mingle: Security Public Storage**
Time: 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
Location: 3941 McHenry Ave, Modesto CA, 95356
- 13** **Salvation Army Kidz Day**
Time: 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- 13** **Women in Business – Coffee and Conversations**
Time: 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
- 16** **Ambassador / Welcome Team Meeting**
Time: 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
Location: 1114 J Street, Modesto CA (Modesto Chamber of Commerce Conference Room)
- 16** **Government Relations Council**
Time: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: 1114 J St, Modesto, CA 95354
Speaker: TBD
Topic: TBD

*See website for more detail.

Find Zoom Registry links and more at www.modchamber.org

Please note that calendar events and details are subject to change.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tri Counties Bank Marks 50 Years in Business

Tri Counties Bank proudly celebrated its 50th Anniversary on March 11, 2025. Through five decades of service to the people and businesses of California, Tri Counties Bank has been dedicated to improving the financial success of shareholders, customers, and communities.

Tri Counties Bank was founded in Chico in 1975, with one million dollars in capital, a handful of employees, and a desire to help local small businesses. Today, Tri Counties Bank serves the entire state of California, with nearly \$10 billion in assets, over 1,200 employees, and more than 75 locations. In Modesto, Tri Counties Bank's facilities include a full-service branch at 3601 Pelandale Avenue and a commercial banking center at 1020 10th Street.

Tri Counties Bank is dedicated to providing personalized products and services that are tailored to your specific needs. Whether you are purchasing your first home, growing a business, or simply looking for a better banking experience, Tri Counties Bank delivers personal, small business, and commercial banking solutions designed to improve your financial well-being. The bank offers a comprehensive suite of financial solutions with the flexibility and superior local service you deserve.

As California's Local Bank, Tri Counties Bank is committed to making a positive impact in California communities.



For the 50th Anniversary, Tri Counties Bank partnered with the Foundation for California Community Colleges in support of their Student Ambassador Program. At each campus, ambassadors connect fellow students to food, housing, and other basic needs resources necessary to continue their education.

Tri Counties Bank also demonstrates a commitment to California through community development investments, donations, volunteerism, sponsorships, and scholarship programs. In the Central Valley alone in 2024, the bank donated more than \$213,000 to nonprofit organizations supporting low- to moderate-income individuals, families, and businesses, and contributed

\$115,000 to nonprofits and fundraising events for community organizations. At the same time, bank employees volunteered nearly 2,400 hours with local organizations supporting Central Valley communities.

To learn more about Tri Counties Bank, stop by the local Modesto branch at 3601 Pelandale Avenue, call (209) 548-4030, or visit [TriCountiesBank.com](https://www.TriCountiesBank.com).

Equal Housing Lender.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oak Valley Community Bank Announces Commercial Credit Officer Hiring

OAKDALE, CA – Oak Valley Community Bank, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Oak Valley Bancorp (NASDAQ: OVLY), announced that Jean Turpen has joined the bank as Vice President, Commercial Credit Officer. She is based out of the Roseville Office located at 1478 Stone Point Drive.

Turpen has 21 years of banking experience and a distinguished career in the banking industry, having held various leadership positions in commercial credit and lending. Her understanding of commercial lending, credit risk management, and financial analysis makes her an invaluable addition to the bank. In her new role, she will be responsible for client relationship management, portfolio management, and credit analysis. She will work closely with the Greater Sacramento Region team to drive sustainable growth and maintain our commitment to excellence in service and performance.

"We're excited to welcome Jean to our team. Her experience and proven track record in the banking sector will be instrumental in driving our commercial credit strategies and supporting our growth

objectives," said Gary Stephens, EVP Commercial Banking Group. Turpen earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from University of Alaska Anchorage. She is a member of the Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA).

Turpen resides in Orangevale with her husband and two sons. In her free time, she enjoys fitness, gardening, orchestral music, and reading.

Oak Valley Bancorp operates Oak Valley Community Bank & their Eastern Sierra Community Bank division, through which it offers a variety of loan and deposit products to individuals and small businesses. They currently operate through 18 conveniently located branches: Oakdale, Turlock, Stockton, Patterson, Ripon, Escalon, Manteca, Tracy, Sacramento, Roseville, two branches in Sonora, three branches in Modesto, and three branches in their Eastern Sierra division, which includes Bridgeport, Mammoth Lakes, and Bishop. The company will open its 19th branch location in Lodi later this year. For more information, call 1-866-844-7500 or visit www.ovcb.com.



WOMEN IN BUSINESS MENTORSHIP NETWORK

A PROGRAM OF THE MODESTO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

EVENING SOCIAL

APRIL 17TH, 2025
5PM - 6:30PM



cora
AT ROSEBURG SQUARE

825 W Roseburg Ave, Modesto, CA 95350

Join us for a special evening filled with great opportunities to network, enjoy delicious cuisine, and sip on delightful drinks! Whether you're a seasoned professional, an aspiring entrepreneur, or someone eager to connect with inspiring women, this event is tailored just for you.

Be sure to register in advance—exclusive rates are available for members and non-members alike.

Bring your business cards for a chance to win some fantastic prizes! We look forward to a memorable night of inspiration, connections, and fun!



Complimentary refreshments provided with your registration!

bit.ly/4kFYSiC

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE

RISEING PROFESSIONALS

A PROGRAM OF THE MODESTO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Evening Social

APRIL 1ST, 2025
5:00PM - 6:30 PM



918 13TH ST,
MODESTO, CA 95354

Join us for a relaxed and engaging evening designed for Modesto's rising professionals! Whether you're a seasoned business leader or just beginning your career journey, this event offers the perfect opportunity to forge new connections within our vibrant community.

What to Expect:
Network with Local Leaders: Build relationships with professionals across various industries and create lasting connections that could help your career or business thrive. Learn more about the Chamber's initiatives, programs, and how they can support you and your business.



Register today at:
bit.ly/4l0QKt0

Modesto Small Business and Entrepreneur Programs

BY ROBERT KIMBALL

2024 marked three city-supported small business and entrepreneurship support programs, the Revive. Restore. Reimagine: City of Modesto Loan Program, Shop Greater Modesto Online e-commerce platform, and the SizeUp Business Intelligence platform.

These programs help small businesses and entrepreneurs access capital, expand their marketing, and market their products, supporting local business startup and growth.

Modesto Revolving Loan Program is Open for Business

The Modesto Revolving Loan Program was launched with ARPA funds to assist businesses in Modesto with expansion and beautification. Administered by Valley First Credit Union, the program launched in February is Building Modesto's Bright Future Together with Small Business Growth and Expansion Loans from \$2,500 to \$75,000, and Business Beautification Loans up to \$100,000, with interest rates as low as 2.5% APR.

"For 75 years, Valley First has been committed to helping our communities prosper. Partnering with the City of Modesto to launch this loan fund aligns with

our mission to support local businesses and drive sustainable growth. Together, we're reviving, restoring, and reimagining what's possible," noted Kathryn J. Davis, CCE, President & CEO, Valley First Credit Union.

Shop Greater Modesto Online adds e-Commerce to local business marketing

Shop Greater Modesto is a free e-commerce platform that helps local businesses expand their market reach and add e-commerce sales capability to more effectively compete with larger businesses. Shop Greater Modesto is provided by the Modesto Chamber of Commerce. Information is available at <https://www.shopgreatermodesto.com/>

"The Shop Greater Modesto e-commerce platform has successfully onboarded numerous local businesses, providing them with a valuable digital presence and the opportunity to connect with customers online. The potential of the platform is limitless. We stand committed to this initiative, which aligns with our goal of fostering a thriving local economy and empowering small businesses in our community," said Trish Christensen, CEO of the Modesto Chamber of Commerce.



Simply Free Business Checking

- **No minimum balance**
- **No monthly service charge**
- **1,000 FREE monthly transaction items**
- **Up to \$25,000 currency deposited per month FREE**

Other fees such as non-sufficient funds, overdraft, etc. may apply. See Schedule of Fees for details. Minimum opening deposit is only \$50. Ask us for details. Bank rules and regulations apply. Transaction items include all debits and credits. If the Simply Free Business account exceeds 1,000 free monthly transactions, the account may be converted to another checking product. If the Simply Free Business account exceeds \$25,000 in monthly coin and currency deposits, the account may be converted to another checking product.



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Oakdale • Escalon • Manteca • Modesto • Patterson • Ripon
Roseville • Sacramento • Sonora • Stockton • Tracy • Turlock



Celebrating Local Excellence: Intrinsic Elements, a Metaphysical Gift Boutique

Nestled in the heart of Modesto, Intrinsic Elements has been a beacon of tranquility, creativity, and community spirit since it first opened its doors. Located at 1214 J Street, this metaphysical gift store is the brainchild of Susie Fagundes and Michelle Powers, who envisioned a space where people could find unique and meaningful gifts, as well as a haven for personal growth.

From its inception on April 15, 2014, Intrinsic Elements has been an integral part of the Modesto Chamber of Commerce. Over the years, it has established itself not only as a retail destination but also as a community hub. The store is managed by Jesika, whose dedication and passion have been evident from day one.

This year, Intrinsic Elements is proud to celebrate its 15th anniversary! To mark this milestone, the store will be hosting special events and promotions throughout the month of April. It's a wonderful opportunity for



both new and longtime customers to join in the celebration and experience the magic of Intrinsic Elements.

Intrinsic Elements offers a wide array of classes that cater to diverse interests, including

meditation and jewelry making. These classes provide an opportunity for individuals to explore new hobbies, find inner peace, and connect with like-minded individuals.

As we celebrate Intrinsic Elements, we honor the spirit of small businesses that make our community vibrant.

Susie, Michelle, Jesika, and the entire team at Intrinsic Elements exemplify the hard work, passion, and dedication that are

the hallmarks of successful small businesses. We look forward to seeing their continued growth and contributions to our community.



SCORE | Central Foothills

**Nahrin Alkhas**
Chapter Chair

**Vesselin Gueorguiev**
Vice Chair

**Bryan Fletcher**
Treasurer

At **SCORE Central Foothills**, we are proud to serve the small business community across seven counties in California.

**COLLABORATIVE CULTURE:**
Work With Passionate And Talented SCORE Leaders!

**BECOME A CERTIFIED MENTOR:**
Make a lasting impact by helping small businesses grow and succeed!



APPLY NOW

www.score.org/volunteer-opportunities

Growth in the Valley

BY JOVANA LLOYD

Growing a small business is no small feat, especially in a competitive market like Modesto, California. As the owner of Lloyd's of La Luna LLC, I've experienced firsthand the challenges and opportunities that come with building a brand from the ground up.

When I started my business, I was juggling responsibilities at home while also trying to turn my passion for natural products into something sustainable. Over the years, I've learned valuable lessons that can help other small business owners navigate their own paths to growth.

One of the most important aspects of growth is building a strong foundation. Many small businesses fail because they lack structure in their operations. Having a solid business plan, clear financial goals, and an understanding of market trends is crucial.

In Modesto, where there's a thriving community of local makers and entrepreneurs, standing out requires more than just a good product. It requires strategy.

For Lloyd's of La Luna, growth has come from a mix of local engagement and smart marketing. Getting involved in the community through farmers' markets, pop-up events, and networking opportunities has helped us build relationships with customers and other business owners.

Word-of-mouth marketing remains one of the strongest tools for small businesses. When people love your product and trust your brand, they share it with others.

Another key factor is adaptability. The market is always shifting, and small businesses need to stay flexible. When I first started, I focused mainly on soaps, but after listening to customer feedback, I expanded into candles, beard care, and custom-branded products.

This ability to pivot and respond to demand has been essential to sustaining and growing Lloyd's of La Luna.

Digital marketing has also played a huge role. While Modesto has a strong local economy, an online presence allows small businesses to reach a much wider audience.



LLOYD'S OF LA LUNA
Soapery & Apothecary

Having a well-designed website, active social media channels, and engaging content can make a big difference.

At Lloyd's of La Luna, we use a combination of organic social media engagement, email marketing, and special promotions to keep customers interested and coming back.

One of the biggest challenges for small businesses is financial stability. Growth requires investment, whether it's for inventory, branding, or expanding production.

Seeking out funding options, whether through small business grants, loans, or crowdfunding, can make a significant difference. For us, careful budgeting and reinvesting profits into the business have been essential.

For small businesses in Modesto and beyond, success isn't just about selling products—it's about creating a brand that people connect with.

Offering high-quality, unique products, maintaining excellent customer service, and being active in the community all contribute to long-term growth.

If you're a small business owner looking to expand, focus on what makes your brand special. Engage with your local market, be open to adapting, and use digital tools to your advantage. Growth doesn't happen overnight, but with persistence and the right strategies, it's absolutely possible.

Be You Yoga And Ayurveda

BY MICHELLE PATINO FOUNDER AND OWNER OF BE YOU YOGA

Are You Looking to Eat Better? Whether your goal is to lose weight, manage a condition like diabetes or IBS, or simply address common digestive issues, embracing better eating habits can make all the difference. According to Ayurveda—the ancient science closely linked to yoga and considered the foundation of many modern medicinal systems—how you eat is just as crucial as what you eat. By following simple, time-tested guidelines, you can make meaningful strides toward a healthier, more mindful relationship with food. Here are a few insights to get started:

1. Pause Before Your First Bite

Before diving into your meal, take a moment to pause. Whether you choose to take three deep breaths, offer a prayer, or simply reflect on the journey your food has taken to reach your plate, this act of mindfulness can set the stage for better digestion. By pausing, you engage your nervous system and prepare your body to fully embrace the process of nourishing itself.

2. Chew Your Food Thoroughly

Rather than focusing on a specific number of chews, aim for a consistent, porridge-like texture before swallowing. Proper chewing not only enhances the mechanical breakdown of food but also allows enzymes in your saliva to begin the chemical digestion process. This simple practice can significantly ease the workload on your stomach and improve overall nutrient absorption.

3. Stop at 75% Full

Think of your digestive system as a fire—it needs room to breathe in order to burn brightly. By eating until you feel satisfied rather than completely full, you allow your digestive fire to work more effectively.

Ayur (Life) + Veda (Knowledge)

A sister science to Yoga that focuses on inner and outer wellbeing through balancing elements in the body.



Be You

YOGA AND AYURVEDA

WWW.BEYOUMODESTO.COM

This not only aids digestion but also maximizes your ability to absorb the nutrients that your body truly needs.

For more practical tips like these and a deeper dive into improving your digestion—and by extension, your quality of life—join us for the upcoming class, **"Better Digestion for a Better Life."**

Date: Thursday, April 17 **Time:** 6:00 PM **Location:** 804 14th Street (space is limited!) **Cost:** \$20 investment for a wealth of knowledge

Reserve your spot today: Call 209-568-6955 for details!



April 3, 2025
11:30AM - 1:00PM



SPEAKER:
Heidi Savage, CEO,
Downtown Improvement District/
Downtown Partnership

TOPIC:
Unlocking Downtown
Modesto's Potential through
Placemaking

**Downtown
Modesto
Partnership**



APRIL 18, 2025
11:30AM - 1:00PM

PRESENTATION SPEAKER(S):
TBA

TOPIC:
TBA



28TH ANNUAL AG AWARE

Modesto City Schools FFA Scholarship Fundraising Luncheon



"Learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live, living to serve!"

Thursday, April 17th, 2025
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM - MJC ACE Ag Pavilion

Join us for the 28th Annual Ag Aware Voss-Berryhill Scholarship Luncheon, where we come together to support the next generation of agricultural innovators. This meaningful event highlights the incredible achievements of Modesto City School's FFA students and raises crucial funds to provide them with scholarships that will shape their future careers. Enjoy a fantastic meal while connecting with local farmers, industry leaders, and community members who share a passion for agriculture and education. Don't miss the opportunity to invest in the future of agriculture.

KEYNOTE SPERAKER PANEL



Modesto Irrigation District
Jimi Netniss
General Manager



Oakdale Irrigation District
Eric Thorburn
Water Resources Manager
District Engineer



Turlock Irrigation District
Brad Koehn
General Manager

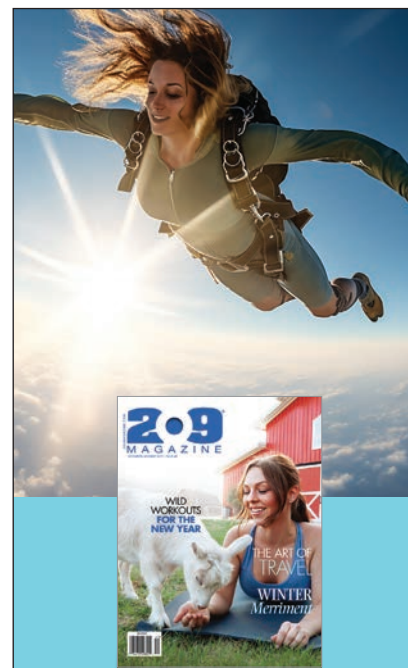


NETWORK
Network with fellow industry professionals and community leaders who share a passion for agriculture.

FFA STUDENT PROJECTS
See first hand the hard work of students, and have the opportunity to take home a project.

SUPPORT EDUCATION
Hear from current students and how they have been positively impacted by being in FFA.

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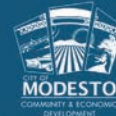
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Empowering Small Business and Entrepreneurism: The Journey of Kayshaun Brooks

BY KAYSHAUN BROOKS, FOUNDER OF RENEW YOU BODY BUTTERS

In today's dynamic business landscape, small businesses are the backbone of local economies, and entrepreneurs like Kayshaun Brooks are leading the charge. As the founder of the 3X award-winning skincare company Renew You Body Butters, Kayshaun's journey from a nurse to a thriving business owner highlights the power of resilience, innovation, and community collaboration.

Kayshaun Brooks, known as The Holistic Pain & Trauma Warrior and a world record holder, has made a remarkable transition from healthcare to holistic entrepreneurship. What's even more inspiring is how she built her business while bed-ridden due to personal health challenges. Despite being confined to her bed, Kayshaun didn't let this obstacle stop her. She drew on her nursing background and passion for holistic healing to create Renew You Body Butters, a brand focused on helping people with sensitive skin issues like eczema, rosacea, and hyperpigmentation. Her mission was clear: to create healing products that empower individuals to feel confident in their skin.



Starting a company while facing physical limitations is no small feat, but Kayshaun's determination and entrepreneurial spirit never wavered. She utilized the time spent at home to research, formulate, and build a business model that would eventually attract a loyal customer base. Renew You Body Butters now offers wholesale and private label services, and Kayshaun has expanded her reach by partnering with almost 70 affiliates and a celebrity brand ambassador. This network of relationships has played a key role in the company's growth and success.

Kayshaun's commitment to collaboration extends beyond her own business. She actively helps other entrepreneurs start and scale their affiliate programs, understanding that success is not just about individual achievement but about building a supportive, interconnected community. For Kayshaun, entrepreneurship is about empowerment, and she is passionate about helping others navigate their own business journeys.

As a community leader, Kayshaun exemplifies the spirit of entrepreneurship. She's a testament to the idea that challenges do not define us, and with passion, perseverance, and collaboration, small businesses can make a profound impact. Her story proves that when we rise together, we can overcome any hurdle and create lasting success along the way.

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The “Social” In Media: Cultivating Digital Impact

BY SAVANNAH WILLIAMS

As a social media consultant, I urge business owners to utilize your social media activity for collective growth by transforming from a mere marketing tool into a powerful engine of community support. Share local businesses, spotlight their unique offerings, and amplify their voices.

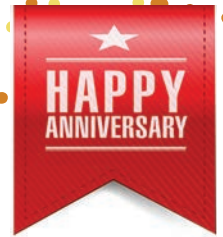
Create collaborative content, host joint giveaways, and engage in genuine dialogue. This isn't just altruism; it's smart strategy. Supporting others enriches your content, fosters authentic engagement, and signals to algorithms in your favor - expanding your reach. “Turning Ideas Into Digital Reality” is not just my tagline; it is my way of life.

As a business owner, I am proud to be a liaison of digital collaboration that transforms isolated efforts into a powerful, interconnected network that promotes collaborative growth and shared success for all. Let's connect, work and grow! www.savannahwilliams.net



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A Day With Public Safety

BY: DANIEL STARR AND ANNA GENASCI, LEMO 2025

On March 7, 2025, the Leadership Modesto class spent the day with the Modesto Police Department (MPD) and the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) to gain an in-depth understanding of public safety operations.

The day began at the Modesto Police Department with introductions from MPD leadership, followed by a leadership discussion led by Chief Brandon Gillespie and Assistant Chief Ivan Valencia. A key topic was the Force Options Simulator (FOS), which MPD will begin offering to the public quarterly to build trust and transparency in law enforcement. The group also debriefed their ride-alongs, where many participants expressed admiration for the professionalism and compassion displayed by officers. Discussions covered recruitment challenges, officer experience levels, and the importance of treating community members with respect.

Next, Lieutenant Kalani Souza presented on MPD's aerial support, highlighting Sky-1, a GippsAero GA8 aircraft introduced in 2023. The presentation showcased the aircraft's advanced technology, cost-effectiveness compared to helicopters, and its success

in aiding law enforcement operations. The group then observed various MPD demonstrations, including the Real-Time Crime Center, K-9 Unit, SWAT Team, and drone operations.

The afternoon transitioned to the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office, where Sergeant Adam Stovall and his team demonstrated SWAT, K-9, bomb squad, and special vehicle operations. Sheriff Jeff Dirkse led a discussion on the structural differences between a police department and a sheriff's office, highlighting the unique responsibilities of the Adult Corrections Division. Participants toured the county jail and observed a demonstration from the Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT), which showcased tactics such as flash bangs, CS gas, and pepper ball launchers.

One of the most engaging experiences of the day was the Force Options Simulator at the training academy. This hands-on experience provided insight into the split-second decision-making required of law enforcement officers. The discussion also covered police academy training, scenario-based education, and common challenges recruits face.

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Small Business and Entrepreneurism Leveraging AI for Success in Modesto and Stanislaus County

BY KATHRYN KIM RAMOS, SISBRO INNOVATION WEBSITE AND DIGITAL MARKETING CONSULTANT

Small businesses and entrepreneurs are the backbone of Modesto, Stanislaus County, and our local community businesses. Whether running a café, a boutique, a landscaping company, or a digital marketing agency, the key to success lies in consistency, efficiency, adaptability, and customer engagement. As we move into 2025, artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming how small businesses operate, making daily tasks easier, improving productivity, and helping business owners focus on growth.

AI-powered tools can be your best ally if you're a small business owner looking to scale your business. From automating customer interactions to streamlining operations, AI can handle repetitive tasks so you can focus on the bigger picture—building relationships, increasing revenue, and staying ahead of the competition.

How AI is Changing Small Business and Entrepreneurism

AI is no longer just for big corporations. Many affordable, easy-to-use AI tools are now available for small business owners in Modesto and Stanislaus County, making competing in today's digital marketplace easier. Here's how AI is helping local businesses thrive:

1. Automating Customer Service

AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can take care of common customer questions around the clock, making it easier for small businesses to provide top-notch service without needing extra staff. Local businesses in Modesto can use chatbots on their websites and social media to handle FAQs, book appointments, and even process simple transactions—saving time while keeping customers happy.

2. Enhancing Social Media Marketing

AI tools can help small businesses in Stanislaus County schedule social media posts, create engaging content, and analyze audience engagement. Platforms like ChatGPT and Canva AI can generate social media captions, suggest trending hashtags, and design eye-catching graphics to boost online visibility.

3. AI-Powered Accounting & Expense Tracking

Small business owners often struggle with bookkeeping and financial management. AI-driven accounting tools like QuickBooks and Xero can automatically categorize expenses, generate invoices, and even send payment reminders, ensuring you stay on top of your finances.



4. AI for Inventory Management

Retailers, restaurants, and service-based businesses in Modesto and surrounding areas can use AI to track stock levels, predict demand, and even reorder supplies automatically.

This helps avoid stockouts or over-purchasing, saving money and streamlining operations.

Free AI Hack: Use Google Lens for Quick Business Insights

If you're a local business owner in Modesto or Stanislaus County, one free AI tool that can save you time and boost efficiency is Google Lens. This AI-powered image recognition tool is built into most Android devices (and available as an app on iPhone), and it can be a game-changer for small businesses.

Here's how you can use it for free:

- **Quickly Scan & Digitize Documents** – Have a stack of handwritten notes, receipts, or business cards? Instead of manually typing them out, use Google Lens to scan and convert them into editable text. This is perfect for keeping track of business expenses, organizing vendor contacts, or saving customer details.
- **Identify Products & Price Comparisons** – If you run a retail or e-commerce business, Google Lens lets you snap a picture of any product and instantly find similar items online. This can help you stay competitive with pricing, discover trending products, or even check for suppliers.
- **Instant Translation for Multilingual Customers** – If you serve a diverse customer base in Modesto, Google Lens can translate menus, signage, or instructions into different languages instantly, making your business more accessible and customer-friendly.
- **Find Business Inspiration** – See a logo, design, or storefront display you love? Snap a picture with Google Lens, and it will show you similar designs, helping you find creative ideas for marketing, branding, and packaging.

Building Strong Careers: Workforce Development's Impact on In-Demand Trades

BY JULIE ORONA / COMMUNITY OUTREACH & MARKETING MANAGER / STANISLAUS COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Stanislaus County Workforce Development (SCWD) offers a variety of programs and services designed to support job seekers and businesses. One of the most impactful is the MC3 Apprenticeship Readiness Program, delivered in partnership with ValleyBuild. This six-week, full-time program provides hands-on, MC3-certified training in collaboration with local Building Trade Councils. Participants earn industry-recognized certifications like OSHA 10, CPR/First Aid, forklift operation, and hazardous waste awareness. SCWD also provides wraparound services to ensure high employment rates for graduates.

Monica Hack, Vocational Training Specialist at Workforce Development, shared that these supportive services greatly increase a student's ability to complete the program. These services include transportation assistance, purchasing tools and work gear, and steel-toed boots. As students approach graduation, SCWD helps with resume building, mock interviews, and job searches to position them for success.

Kyle Heiny, a graduate of the second cohort, praised the program's effectiveness: "I feel more confident in my career path even coming from multiple jobs with a bunch of work experience. This program really dialed in to exactly what we needed to know and gave us the best possible head start before even getting out on the job. Workforce Development made it so easy and seamless to give me all the tools I need to get out there and be the best plumber and pipe fitter I can be."



Kyle, who had applied to the program several times, was finally accepted after connecting with SCWD. Following graduation, he secured a five-year journeyman position with competitive wages and benefits. If you need to fill positions in the building industry, contact us at (209) 558-WORK.



So far, two cohorts have completed the program, totaling 22 students with 12 graduates already employed. The next cohort will be starting June 23. Apply before June 6th by calling (209) 558-HIRE.

The mission of Stanislaus County Workforce Development is to work with businesses to identify the needs of in-demand occupations and develop a skilled

workforce that strengthens businesses and contributes to the community's economic success.

Stanislaus County Workforce Development Services Include:

For more information, visit stanworkforce.com.





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