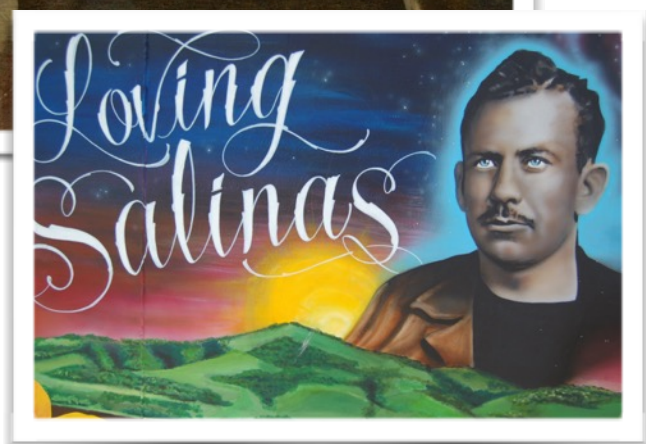
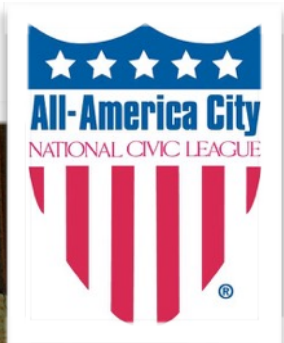


**2015 All-America City Awards Application
Spotlight on Engaging and Supporting
Vulnerable Boys and Young Men**

City of Salinas, California



Community Information for Salinas, CA

Community name and state: Salinas, CA

Your community is applying as a:

Neighborhood Village Town Tribe City County Region

If applying as a region, name participating communities: n/a

If applying as a neighborhood, name city: n/a

Has your community applied before? Yes If Yes, which years: 2006

Has your community been a Finalist before? Yes If Yes, which years: 2006

Has your community been an All-America City before? No

Contact Information

All-America City Award contact (primary contact person available throughout competition & follow-up):

Name: Jim Pia Title (if any): Deputy City Manager

Organization/Government/Other: City of Salinas

Address: 200 Lincoln Avenue City, State, Zip Salinas, CA 93901

Phone (business/day): (831) 758-7201 Mobile Phone (831) 235-9190

E-mail Address(es): jimp@ci.salinas.ca.us

The applying community will receive a complimentary membership (or membership renewal if an AAC application was submitted last year) to the National Civic League for one year. To whom should this membership be directed?

Name Ray Corpuz, City Manager

Address 200 Lincoln Avenue

City, State & Zip Code Salinas, CA 93901

Phone Number (831) 758-7201 Fax (831) 758-7368

Email ray.corpuz@ci.salinas.ca.us

We agree to follow NCL's rules regarding use of the AllAmerica City Award logo, a registered trademark of the National Civic League. We allow NCL and the All-America City Award to share this application and the information enclosed in it with the NCL and AAC networks to promote the work of our community. If we are named an All-America City, we agree to conduct a post-AAC conference call or regional forum for the AAC network that features our projects. In a pay-it-forward spirit, if named a finalist or All-America City, we agree to support AAC through an NCL membership for a minimum of the next three years. See membership details [here](#).

Signature: _____ Date: March 6, 2015

Name: Ray Corpuz Title: City Manager

Community Statistics and Map for Salinas, CA

Note: Use the most up-to-date statistics possible for your neighborhood, town, city, county, or region (source suggestions: U.S. Census Bureau, State Department of Economic Security, State Department of Finance, Department of Public Health, and local school statistics).

POPULATION (in year 2010 or most recent): 155,662

Source/Date: U.S. Census 2013

POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGE 2000-2010 (indicate + or -): +3.3%

Source/Date: U.S. Census 2013 and 2010

RACIAL/ETHNIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN:

White	<u>45.8%</u>
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	<u>75.0%</u>
Black or African American	<u>2.0%</u>
Asian	<u>6.3%</u>
American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN)	<u>1.3%</u>
Mixed Race	<u>5.1%</u>
Other	<u>39.2%</u>

Source/Date: U.S. Census 2010

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: \$ \$49,264

Source/Date: U.S. Census 2010

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 21.0%

Source/Date: U.S. Census 2010

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: 7.4%

Source/Date: Bureau of Labor Statistics 07/2014

POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP (percentages, if available):

19 years old and under	<u>34.8%</u>
20-24	<u>8.5%</u>
25-44	<u>30%</u>
45-64	<u>19.2%</u>
65 and over	<u>7.4%</u>

Source/Date: U.S. Census 2010

PERCENTAGE OF HOME OWNERSHIP: 45.1%

Source/Date: U.S. Census 2010

WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION -- Name the three largest employment sectors (include military services and/or installations, if any) in your community and provide the percentage of total employed in each:

<u>Government</u>	<u>22.9%</u>
<u>Trade, Transportation, Utilities</u>	<u>19.9%</u>
<u>Leisure & Hospitality</u>	<u>18.1%</u>

Source/Date: Bureau of Labor Statistics 07/2014



City of Salinas; All-America City Awards Application

The individuals, families, businesses, and organizations that call the community of Salinas home, have proven over and over again our strength to overcome challenges and to solve problems. Our unique organizations, community art, and special events reflect the remarkable talent assets of Salinas! Crediting individuals, collectives, as well as undertakings by our masses we have much in our community about which to boast.

"I think I would like to write the story of this whole valley, of all the little towns and all the farms and the ranches in the wilder hills. I can see how I would like to do it so that it would be the valley of the world."

~John Steinbeck
Nobel-Prize winning author

Our people are diverse in myriad ways, but all enjoy connectedness. And connected we are through historic and current stories of resourcefulness and resiliency; in the daily sights of spectacular natural vistas, lush fields, and urban art; with crisp winds, rolling fog, and average 68 degree temperatures; and at times by a fear of violence, yet by a stronger hope for peace. This connectedness is not only why we come together in fun celebrations, it is also our best tool to solve our most pressing challenges.

There was a time we may have only been reacting to crisis; Years ago it was observed and noted during a community forum that we were practically "held captive to growing crime." Yet, our historic community pride has always outweighed, with perhaps at times, waves of crime and other challenges strengthening our ties.

This spirit of community has been our path to overcome problems. Today, that pride coupled with real experience has led and inspired us to become proactive, more trusting of each other, and celebratory of all that is Salinas. As seen in our project highlights, this momentum has evolved into a revolution of united neighborhoods that are committed to maintaining peace, an intentional nurturing of our youth, and creation of true opportunities for residents, among other beautiful outcomes.

To buildup the foundation of these endeavors, focus is being placed upon strengthening our communications and interactions. For example, in November, the National Compadres Network and The Center for Racial Justice Innovation led a training for 50 community members and 50 city staff members to open a dialogue about governing for racial equity and launching an ongoing effort to improve equity in Salinas.

Also, there exists a sincere eagerness to prepare our future leaders. Several stellar programs include Motivating Individual Leadership for Public Advancement (MILPA), Leadership Salinas Valley (LSV), California Agricultural Leadership Program, and Safe Teens Empowerment Project (STEPS). Each maintain dedicated outreach and are either offered free or with partial scholarships.

What's more, opportunities for the community to be included in decision making and planning for our future take place regularly and often. As a current example, over the past few months City Government invited residents to discuss housing needs to update City housing plans and policy documents. Four community workshops in Spanish with English (and vice versa) translation were held at various locations North, East, South, and Northeast. Childcare was made available when needed. In addition, a bilingual community survey is available online and

paper copies at all City libraries. Similarly, extensive stakeholder involvement was solicited in creating the Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan, the vision for the Alisal Marketplace, and the Economic Development Element of the City's Strategic Plan.

Also current and on everyone's minds, Measure G, a one cent sales tax, was passed by residents this past November, "To improve our quality of life, maintain and enhance city services and facilities, including: crime and gang prevention; neighborhood policing and school safety; safety inspections; police, fire and paramedic response; fixing potholes, streets, and sidewalks; recreation and programs for youth and seniors; and other city services." As customary, City Government is gathering resident input in establishing spending priorities in various ways including by holding community budget meetings and publicizing online or hard copy surveys.

It was exciting to see dozens of youth present and active at all of these mentioned meetings!

These types of events are also used to educate residents; In this example, the opportunity was seized to create a greater awareness about our regular City budget process. Participants at forums are also encouraged to serve upon a board or commission or otherwise volunteer in the community. What's more, great effort is placed upon publicizing these community forums via bilingual PSAs and email invitations as well as by using social media and direct word-of-mouth communications to reach organizations that interact often with farm workers, youth, homeless, disabled, and more. Full participation in defining the future of our City is desired.

During the budgeting forums, a poll was taken to inquire what residents enjoy about Salinas and want to continue or to grow stronger. A few quoted responses were:

"Anything that involves youth."
~Lizbeth Mondragon, 15-yrs-old

"Seeing the fruits of our community involvement."
~Jorge Rubio, 20-yrs-old

"Community events that highlight our diversity. I moved here seven years ago from Mexico, and I enjoy and want to be an even bigger part of our community."
~Lalo Flores, 28-yrs-old

"We have so much good; We just need to promote the good."
~Nick Brockman, 82-yrs-old

This same poll revealed a few favorite events/venues that each celebrate the diversity of our community and are reflective of major accomplishments reached TOGETHER. Though truly, our business community and service organizations are at the heart of volunteerism and funding for each of these nonprofit entities that are local and tourist favorites.

The California Rodeo Salinas is one of the top 20 Professional Rodeos in the United States and the largest in California. Known in the rodeo world for our big arena and beautiful buckles, the Rodeo is a not-for-profit organization that gives back over \$350,000 each year to local nonprofits. This is all accomplished by approximately 1,100 volunteers including 52 active Rodeo directors and 59 committees. Generations of families have been volunteers, becoming part of the Rodeo family and history.

The Annual **EI Grito Festival** draws thousands to celebrate Mexican Independence Day. A free street fair in the E. Alisal Street business district, it is a full afternoon of live music including mariachis; dance performances by folklorico and Aztec dance groups; food vendors featuring delicacies from the different regions of Mexico; children's activities and information booths staffed by community agencies.

A home grown community event, the **California International Airshow Salinas** has been showcasing aviation excellence for over 30 years while at the same time raising nearly \$8 million for local charities. Utilizing all volunteers and service groups from the community, the organization executes the event that entertains 40-50,000 spectators annually.

The United States Air Force Thunderbirds named the Salinas Airshow “Best Civilian Show Site of 2014.” Also in 2014, we were honored with the first-ever Pinnacle Award for Innovation Excellence- Platinum Level by the International Council of Airshows. Bruce Adams, Executive Director of the Salinas Airshow said, “*To be named the Best Civilian Show twice in four years is an incredible honor. It takes a lot of work by a lot of amazing volunteers to pull something like this off.*”

In addition to hosting a premier collection of artifacts, books, and film clips, the **National Steinbeck Center** (NSC) builds community and celebrates creativity across the nation. 2014 saw a nation-wide Festival with the 75th anniversary of the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*. The centerpiece of Oldtown Salinas, the entity has been challenged with financial sustainability. Though recently, an opportunistic partnership emerged between with California State University- Monterey Bay (CSUMB) which will bring financial certainty to the mission of the NSC and new educational opportunities to students.

When “Envisioning Our Best Future Together” during facilitated community meetings, our shared vision for the City of Salinas evolved:

The City of Salinas has a vibrant, diversified and resilient economy and business environment that makes us the first choice for new and existing employers and businesses in the region. Jobs are created that provide residents with well paying, career ladder employment opportunities. Business development is leveraged by the area's many assets.

The police and fire safety systems (staff, facility, equipment, technology) are efficient, effective, and innovative. Our community embodies an attitude of partnership and shared responsibility to look out for one another to reduce crime and improve overall safety of all residents. We create adequate funding for public safety by adopting consistent and predictable funding sources.

The City is effective in providing efficient, innovative services. Residents are treated with courtesy, dignity and respect. The City is committed to fostering civic engagement, volunteerism, and building strong strategic partnerships. Resources are allocated effectively and fiscal solvency and sustainability are achieved.

Salinas enjoys safe roads, streets, and infrastructure systems that are well planned and maintained. Investments are made to protect and maintain the infrastructure in an efficient, cost effective manner. The community participates to identify needs and set priorities.

The City is a healthy, vibrant, sustainable, green community with robust opportunities for recreation, sports, leisure, health, and education. We foster a healthy and dynamic arts community that encompasses every aspect of performing, written, spoken and creative arts. There is a focus on prevention and intervention in our programming. Youth, individuals, families, parents, and the elderly are flourishing. Parks, community centers, libraries, sports facilities, schools, and the arts are thriving and well utilized. People are integrating physical activities into their daily routines. There are special events that highlight the multi-cultural heritage and many assets of the community. There is abundant community pride.

In working toward this vision, our most pressing needs, turned exciting opportunities, are being addressed through coordinated community initiatives that reflect our commitment to work together in partnerships including the business-sector, the nonprofit-sector, neighborhoods, schools, as well as City, County, State and Federal government. We leverage existing consortiums and networks, and we reach even further for wisdom and assistance by developing other beneficial relationships such as with the Naval Postgraduate School and the City of San Jose as well as other neighboring communities.

Just a few of our more recent successes are highlighted here:

1) Tatum’s Garden, A Playground for ALL Children

A fully inclusive, accessible playground, Tatum’s Garden, was designed by the community, donated by the community, and built by the community as a gift for our children. It is the only one of its kind within a 250 mile radius and provides an amazing play experience for hundreds of children each week.

Previously a rarely used parking lot, today Tatum’s Garden is filled with custom play structures reflecting the rich agricultural history of the Salinas Valley and showcasing the names of hundreds of families and local businesses who made it all possible. ALL are invited to come play!

2) Police Department Community Relations

The Salinas Police Department works in partnership with the people of Salinas to enhance our quality of life through the delivery of professional, superior and compassionate police services to the community. A more accessible image was needed to accompany the community-oriented policing philosophy, so a professional public relations agency was engaged to design a new website and create messaging that contributes toward a trusting partnership with the community.

3) Salinas Now Saves 4 Million Gallons of Water Per Day

Our industrial wastewater processing plant collects produce processing water utilized in rinsing. With the severe drought and the need for greater resources, Salinas worked with a number of partners in the region to begin recycling this water. We now send it to Marina to be reprocessed, then send it to Castroville for irrigating.

“We’re producing 4 million gallons of irrigation water that wasn’t available 6 months ago.” ~ Gary Petersen, Director of Public Works. This is a prime example of how Salinas is stepping up to be a good partner, being a sustainable City, reducing our carbon footprint, and trying to make the most of what we have.

These are just a few successful efforts at addressing pressing local challenges with initiatives that demonstrate innovation, inclusiveness, civic engagement, and cross sector collaboration. With these and many other ongoing examples, we believe the individuals, families, businesses, and organizations that call the community of Salinas home are deserving to be recognized as an All-America City!

Attachments; other successful efforts that have received recent news coverage:

“Hoop Dreams Fulfilled at Salinas' Closter Park”

The Salinas Californian, February 25, 2015, by Jay Dunn

“City Government improving Communications, Building Trust”

CivSource, February 24, 2015

“Farmer Workers Given Small Plots of Land for Their Own Organic Farms”

KSBW, February 23, 2015, by Brittany Nielsen

“Salinas Valley School Salad Bar Campaign Rolls On”

The Packer, March 20, 2014, by Chris Koger

Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (CASP)

City of Salinas PROJECT ONE

Spotlight on Engaging and Supporting Vulnerable Boys and Young Men

The communities in and around Salinas have dealt with the tragedy of gang and youth violence for over 50 years. The violence had reached a critical level, and better ways to address the issues were vital.

Pervasive violence is a public health issue that impacts individuals and the community as a whole. 100% of the community is effected, be it by experiencing the death of a young loved one, being witness to or a victim of an act of violence, living amongst daily fear and in an environment of intimidation, or as business owners forced to deal with the effects of negative perceptions associated with the area.

Ongoing gang violence is a major contributor to the deterioration of families and communities. What's more, the violence contributes to increases in public and private health care costs, decreases in academic achievement, and inhibits economic development in stressed communities.

There are 16 street gangs and 2 prison gangs in the City of Salinas with an estimated 3,000 certified and affiliated members. Over 90% of active gang members are male. In East Salinas, 68% of suspects of violent crime are 24 years and younger, 92% are Hispanic. (Salinas PD. 2009 Special Crime Report.)

The **Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (CASP)** is a group of government, education, non-profit, business, and neighborhood level leaders who have joined together to reduce gang violence and substantially improve safety.

"We are determined to reduce violence and build a better future for our children." ~Brian Contreras, 2nd Chance Family & Youth Services

In January of 2009, CASP emerged from two like-minded organizations: the City of Salinas' Community Safety Alliance and the Violence Prevention Subcommittee of the Monterey County Children's Council. A multidisciplinary team of leaders from 30+ organizations formed what is currently known as the General Assembly, a professional learning community, meeting twice monthly to assess, plan, and implement effective strategies and share resources to build, support and sustain a peaceful community.

Initially, an inventory of all relevant community resources was taken in order to then identify gaps and strengths in existing services. Our ongoing strategy to restore and sustain peace and public safety is based upon four key principals: 1) a single operational structure for best coordination of targeted services, 2) data-driven action to leverage limited resources, 3) placing youth at the center but also focusing upon influencers, and 4) deep community engagement.

An early CASP activity included uniting in a campaign called For Our Future / Para Nuestro Futuro which includes an informational website, public health campaigns, and coordination of community events. In addition, the first ever Community Safety Division was established within the Administration Department of the City of Salinas and the Youth Council was initiated. What's more, CASP engaged more deeply with the business community through business roundtables.

The involved partners of CASP have become effective resources for truly prioritizing and focusing youth violence prevention and intervention efforts. Residents, elected officials, service organizations, workforce investment programs, housing officials, county health and human services, criminal justice and law enforcement, education and business leaders, representatives of the faith community, as well as private funding organizations are strategically brought together to reduce gang and youth violence.

It is well understood that reducing gang violence is not a problem that can be resolved by traditional law enforcement methods. The most proven and results-based reduction strategies include the entire Continuum of Safety: Prevention, Intervention, Suppression, and Re-Entry.

Therefore in 2010, following our “Progress Toward Peace” community forums with 120 listening sessions (including middle and high school students) and with technical assistance from the City of San Jose, CASP embarked upon a process to create the Comprehensive Strategy for Community-wide Violence Reduction for Salinas; a plan designed to create a safer and healthier community by including all components of the Continuum of Safety. This plan is also known as the Strategic Work Plan (SWP).

The SWP was implemented through a pilot action plan in the Hebron Heights neighborhood of Salinas. This area was selected for a variety of reasons: it is disproportionately high in various categories of crime; it is home to at least two active and opposing gangs; it contains a mix of single family homes, apartment homes, and commercial/retail buildings; and it has two parks and one community center, which offer neighbors and service providers options for meeting places. In short, Hebron was selected due to being a neighborhood in great need but with great potential.

The site specific action plan was developed in partnership with pro bono faculty, staff, and graduate students of the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) located in nearby Monterey. With the intent to engage low-income, high-risk, Latino/Hispanic youth and their families, the goals ensured prioritization of available resources including everything from counseling to extra-curricular activities.

The action plan holds several components that together build relationships and leadership capacity in the community, provide the targeted services to individuals and their families, and increase a sense of safety. These components include: 1) a Cross Functional Team, 2) Community Policing, 3) Leadership Academy, and 4) Night Walks.

1) CASP formed a Cross Functional Team composed of diverse agency, provider, education, health, probation, faith, non-profit, county and city representatives to provide targeted intervention to individuals and their families living with risk factors in the Hebron area. The overall goal of the Cross Functional Team is to assist and empower community members in bringing peace and order to their neighborhoods and provide them with the tools to sustain peace for the long-term. Sustainability efforts include continued engagement by CASP partners bolstered by the local capacity that has been developed.

2) Police Chief Kelly McMillin assigned two full-time Salinas Police Department officers to conduct community-based policing in the Hebron area to build relationships. The “CASP officers,” as they have come to be known, and other officers have increased their attendance at

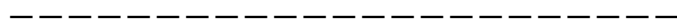
community meetings and activities, and they have engaged in an intentional effort to continue dialogue and engagement. This has added a clear prevention approach to law enforcement that was often missed in our high-risk areas previously. Officers are the cornerstone of the Cross Functional Team because their primary objective is to build trusting relationships.

“Our law enforcement resources are now focused in two ways. First, we focus upon those in the community who would do the most harm, who are at-large right now. Then, we focus upon trust building exercises and in supporting roles in the community where we are able to go out to these young men who are at very high risk for committing violence and say, ‘we are here to help you and we absolutely mean to support you. And if you take our help, we’ll see you on a pathway out of violence.

The community begins to see legitimacy in law enforcement. We have focused our resources where they need to be, and it actually helps to decrease violence. Now, our community is understanding that when we say ‘we are here to help,’ we are supported by a community that stands behind us and with us and provides support. So, even though we have fewer officers to do our job, violence is decreasing and trust and legitimacy within the community is increasing. It is really a remarkable time.” ~Chief Kelly McMillan, Speaking upon the White House Champions of Change Panel in April 2012

3) To further empower residents in the neighborhood, the City’s Community Safety Division, with support from CASP, formed Leadership Academies that provide residents with the skills, knowledge, and tools to become community leaders. To date, 60 residents have committed to being part of the solution and have graduated from four sessions of the 12-week program. For three years, monthly alumni meetings have been ongoing. Due to the level of growing interest and additional funding, two academies will be held in 2015.

Truly encouraging, this effort is now being coordinated and facilitated by Fernanda Ocana, Salinas’ Youth Representative for the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention in Washington D.C. At 22-years-old, she is excelling at community engagement and aims to empower others to become leaders in Salinas.



As reported in coverage by the Salinas Californian Newspaper:

The leadership project was started in this particular neighborhood because of the high rate of crime and gang activity that occurs in this humble community, where many adult residents are Spanish-speaking and hard-working farm laborers. The people who joined the academy learned of the project by attending community "charlas," or chats, at the family center.

"This was a huge commitment. For each and every one of them to spend so much time on this, they should be commended," said Antonia Herrera, CASP manager.

The classes consist of team-building exercises, identifying leadership abilities and characteristics, advocacy, conflict resolution, governance, media, public speaking, education and resource development. Most of the leadership students speak only Spanish and live in the Hebbro community.

"The goal is to mobilize the community to start taking care of their neighborhood and help us become part of the solution in areas where there has been a lot of gang violence," said Herrera.

After the program ends, the leadership students are tasked with reporting crime, leadership program development, neighborhood beautification projects and education.

4) The faith-based community became more involved and action-oriented and has since been leading the Salinas Night Walks, a prevention strategy introduced to the community by Pastor Eddie Caraveo from Sacramento and Reverend Jeffrey Brown from Boston, who has come to Salinas 5 times to personally train Night Walkers. Since its creation in late May 2012, hundreds of residents have participated and continue to participate in walking the city neighborhoods where there is the highest reported criminal activity.

In the two years following implementation, property and violent crimes noticeably declined. In 2009, there were 97 reported violent crimes in Hebbbron Heights; that number went down to 66 in 2012.

"Hebbbron Heights' community-based policing experiment has seen promising results. In 2014, none of Salinas' homicides have occurred in the Hebbbron Heights section of Alisal. In fact, there have only been two shootings in the neighborhood this year. The figures represent a marked decline in violence." ~Officer Richard Lopez

The original process undertaken to create the SWP captured the voice of the larger community and those who are directly or indirectly receiving the services of CASP partner agencies. Stakeholder input ensures that our limited resources are effectively being deployed in the areas identified by the community as most necessary. The Plan is comprehensive and incorporates strategies, utilizing evidence-based models JJCPA and UNITY Prevention, that interrupt acute violence while at the same time address the factors that can lead to violence.

It is agreed that this must be a living, breathing Plan that is flexible enough to change with the trends, patterns and identified issues and that continued meaningful community engagement is the only way to be successful in this endeavor. The primary focus of the SWP is a bold vision of a city of peace supported by ambitious goals that improve our quality of life.

"This is a big transformation in people's lives. After being on parole, I'm able to have empathy for those individuals that need help. Someone who has been there can help somebody who is there or trying to get out of that lifestyle. It is awesome that we get an opportunity to give back to our community, because we took away for so many years. Life is better now; the other lifestyle leads to jail or death." ~Daniel Pace, a former parolee working with CASP partner agency Transitions for Recovery & Re-entry

With significant impact being made as demonstrated by life changing stories such as Daniel's and decreased crime (see charts below), this effort will now be duplicated in the neighborhood of Acosta Plaza beginning the Summer of 2015; with aspirations to saturate the approach throughout the entire City of Salinas within the next few years.

For further reading: <http://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/2014/11/14/agencies-aim-bolster-public-safety-alisal/19043239/>

Contact:

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Crimes Involving a Youth as Perpetrator or Victim, by Crime Type
 Ages 10-24, Salinas, CA, 2010-2013

Type of Crime	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Number of Crimes	Rate per 100,000	Number of Crimes	Rate per 100,000	Number of Crimes	Rate per 100,000	Number of Crimes	Rate per 100,000
Firearms	196	530	173	468	160	433	153	414
Violent Assaults	675	1,825	650	1,758	594	1,606	580	1,569
Violent Sex Crimes	106	287	125	338	107	289	79	214
Domestic Violence	254	687	286	773	228	617	160	433
Drugs	234	633	190	514	140	379	133	360
Violent Child Abuse	136	368	137	370	133	360	101	273
Total	1,601		1,561		1,362		1,206	

Notes: Numerator and denominator data for Salinas ZIP codes 93901,93905, and 93906. Youth defined as ages 10-24 years.
 Population estimate for Salinas Youth is 36,978.
 Source: Salinas Police Department, 2013 and 2014; 2010 US Census.

Violent Injuries to Youth Requiring Emergency Room Care
 Ages 10-24, Salinas, CA, 2010-2012

Year	Salinas	
	Number of Violent Injuries	Rate per 100,000
2010	194	525
2011	187	506
2012	181	489

Notes: Numerator and denominator data for Salina residents, ZIP codes 93901,93905, and 93906. Youth defined as ages 10-24 years.
 Population estimate for Salinas Youth is 36,978.
 Source: Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development: 2010 US Census.

Violent Assaults Against Youth
 Victims Ages 10-24, Salinas, CA, 2010-2013

Year	Salinas	
	Number of Youth Victims	Rate per 100,000
2010	639	1,728
2011	577	1,560
2012	546	1,477
2013	542	1,466

Notes: Numerator and denominator data for Salinas ZIP codes 93901,93905, and 93906. Youth defined as ages 10-24 years.
 Population estimate for Salinas Youth is 36,978.
 Source: Salinas Police Department, 2013 and 2014; 2010 US Census.

The Youth-Led Ciclovía Salinas

City of Salinas PROJECT TWO

“Open Streets” initiatives temporarily close streets to automobile traffic, so that people may use them for walking, bicycling, dancing, playing, and socializing. With more than 100 initiatives in North America, Open Streets are increasingly common in cities seeking innovative ways to achieve environmental, social, economic, and public health goals.

Unique among Open Streets projects, “Ciclovía Salinas” is a youth-led initiative. Provided in their own words, our youth have identified five impacts they aspire towards:

1) Salinas for too long has been viewed negatively and seen only through the media’s portrayal, while many valuable assets in the community go unnoticed. Youth want to show others that there is more to Salinas than the routinely depicted violence. It is a vibrant community, and it is our hope that people will not fear the city but learn to love it the way residents do. At Ciclovía Salinas, people can really see it is a safe community!

2) Ciclovía Salinas promotes health and well-being; it allows residents an accessible space to practice physical activity. There are not very many safe, open spaces for residents to exercise and this provides a unique, free opportunity for the entire family to have fun while doing physical activity.

3) The event route, East to West Alisal Street, has been strategically chosen because it bridges two historically segregated parts of the city. It is quite common for people from the East Side to have never stepped foot in downtown Salinas and vice versa, people from downtown Salinas and South Salinas not to travel to East Salinas. The idea is to unite the community the day of Ciclovía and to gradually, overtime encourage people to feel safe and welcomed on either side of town.

4) Ciclovías also attract tourism and stimulate the local economy. The idea is to have people from different parts of the city and its surroundings explore businesses along the route, which in turn boosts the economy.

5) Lastly, because this is the only “Open Streets” project that is youth-led, it is deeply rooted in youth empowerment. The goal of Ciclovía is to foster youth leadership development and demonstrate that youth have the ability to accomplish anything they set their minds to. There are so many talented youth in our community and we want to allow them to find a means to express their love for their community and the opportunity to make a difference.

In combining all of these factors, we are contributing to the opportunity of changing the narrative of Salinas.

“Our youth are serving the City of Salinas and its residents well by creating a very special welcome for tourists and a vibrant urban scene for locals and visitors alike. They have broken down barriers and shown Salinas is a safe, fun city.” ~ Mayor Joe Gunter

“Ciclovía Salinas” is:

- The ONLY “Open Streets” initiative that is youth-led
- The 1st and only Open Streets project in Monterey County
- Among the 1st dozen Open Streets locations in California
- Among the 1st one hundred Open Streets locations in all of North America

Ciclovía Salinas is an experience shared by people who roll in a wheelchair, bike, skateboard, walk, run, rollerblade, jump on a pogo stick, or otherwise enjoy the freedom of people-powered transportation on car-free streets. Visitors and locals of all ages and abilities are invited to be part of Ciclovía Salinas.

Along the route are free activities such as open-air salsa, baile folklórico, and zumba dance classes; bike polo demonstrations; crossfit activities; hula hoop games; face painting; kids’ zone with tricycles and the educational “Wheelie Mobilee;” cheerleading clinic; soccer clinic; football game, bookmobile; plus live music, art, and more.

“The streets are yours, and we hope you’ll come out to enjoy health-building physical exercise with others.” ~Natalie Oliver, Youth Leader

A free valet parking station is made available during the event for bicycles, bike trailers, wagons, strollers, etc. This makes it easier to stop and patronize local businesses along the route, as well as to participate in the open-air free exercise classes and other activities.

“Logistically, this is a massive undertaking... I am inspired by the passion of the many youth volunteers... and truly believe that a successful Ciclovía can bring some real healing to our troubled streets.” ~Kelly McMillin, Chief of Police

A diverse coalition of individuals and organizations have teamed up in a variety of ways to make Ciclovía Salinas possible and successful. The youth planning committee enlisted the help of local government, foundations, media outlets, nonprofits, neighborhood associations, faith-based entities, as well as large, medium and small businesses; then the excitement spread.

“I think that Ciclovía is a big opportunity to bring the community of Salinas together.” ~Bryan Salas, Youth Leader

Collaboration has been key in making Ciclovía Salinas possible. In truly unprecedented ways, this group of young leaders brings together different sectors from the community to assist. This was the first time the Monterey County Health Department and City Staff had worked together to achieve such a project. The group of stakeholders also included Building Healthy Communities, Center for Community Advocacy, Breathe California Central Coast, among many others.

Coordinating the First Annual Ciclovía Salinas in 2013, there were 13 high school students and a handful of college students contributing. The second year, the number increased to over 50

students from 4 different high schools that formed the planning team. Each committee had its own youth captain and coordinator.

This event would not be possible without its volunteers. There are over 100 youth volunteers the day of the event and well over 150 adult volunteers supervising the barricades. Every aspect of the event functions solely on volunteers; the Disc Jockey playing music, professionals providing physical activity classes, and agencies with informational booths, etc. There were over 35 community partners that offered their time the first year and over 50 the second year. The first event had approximately 2,500 attendees and the second saw over 3,000.

Ciclovía Salinas received a 2013 Transportation Excellence Award from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County. TAMC board members and others also expressed their eagerness for more Ciclovía Salinas dates to be scheduled.

The Monterey County Commission on the Status of Women recognizes the value of Open Streets in improving quality of life. On March 11, 2014, the Commission honored one of the Ciclovía Salinas Youth Leaders, Natalie Oliver, as an Outstanding Woman of Monterey County.

Natalie presented at the National Open Streets Summit 2014. She shared how *“Ciclovía Salinas worked to create an inclusive and equitable initiative that included typically underserved people of the community.”*

José ‘Eduardo’ Huerta, another Ciclovía Salinas Youth Leader, created the logo and other art work, including designing the posters. Even after it was necessary for him to leave East Salinas for graduate school in New York, Eduardo’s dedication continued. In the midst of his studies, he still carried the Ciclovía Salinas event posters to the finish line.



The teamwork and support of City of Salinas officials and staff were vital to the success of the inaugural Ciclovía Salinas in October 2013. Salinas city leaders caught the vision of this youth-led initiative, then provided tangible support to help youth turn their dream into reality.

Initially, City Manager Ray Corpuz met with youth leadership from the Ciclovía Salinas committee to gain a fuller understanding of their Open Streets concept and to learn how the City could best support their dream. Cheri Miller, Executive Assistant to the Mayor and City Manager, assisted with communications and more contributing to youth experiencing first-hand how effective local government works.

“It wasn’t only about hosting an event but also about making connections and building new relationships.” ~Katherine Hernandez

A report from City of Salinas Transportation Planner James Serrano, approved and submitted to the City Council by Public Works Director Gary E. Petersen and Deputy Director and City Engineer Robert Russell, had carefully evaluated Ciclovía Salinas and its potential impacts on the City. The report stated that Ciclovía Salinas supports the City’s infrastructure planning activities, and further, that available alternative transportation funds would be appropriate to allocate for this event. The report recommended the City authorize using those alternative transportation funds to reduce the event’s expenses by \$5,000, including public works and police department time.

Ciclovía Salinas was further boosted by the vote of a unanimous Salinas City Council, presided over by Mayor Joe Gunter. When they recognized a good idea whose time had come, City of Salinas leaders took action! Now, Salinas is home to “a fresh crop of innovative thinkers.”

Chief of Police Kelly McMillin reached out to community leaders, asking their help in filling the positions that were absolutely essential to make Ciclovía Salinas possible. Police-trained barricade volunteers, required by law, number more than one hundred. There are more streets to close than the City of Salinas has ever needed barricades for! Local construction companies, thankfully, loan extra barricades.

Fernanda Ocana, a youth White House Champion of Change, noted, “We (youth) have great ideas, but we don’t understand the policies. At the same time, adults don’t understand the views that youth have.” Ciclovía Salinas is another example of how youth and adults are matching their strengths in Salinas for the greatest good of all concerned.

In assisting to recruit adult volunteers, community leader Gregg Brady wrote:

“There are some very engaged young people helping with the organization of this event, including college students from East Salinas. For example, three of the primary organizers are youth who are attending or just graduated UC-Berkeley. One is now enrolled in grad school in NY, one is at Cal specializing in optometry, and another is a new student at Cal. These youth who come from a challenging section of our city are not only continuing on with their educations, they are turning around to bring others along—including by creating this positive opportunity, by making an impact.

We can take our Sting-Rays over, hang out at our posts, relieve each other and cruise around, interact with the event participants; In general, hang out and have a good time while helping to create a positive influence in our hometown.”

Testimonials by Ciclovía Salinas Youth Leaders:

“The event was definitely a success! I felt like I was making a difference in the lives of others. Everything that I had ever wanted to do in my community became a reality through Ciclovía. I was very excited about what youth could actually do in the beautiful city of Salinas, and we were able to show others that youth can make a difference and make the negative of our city turn around to a positive. The excitement never ended. After the event I felt that my opinion was powerful and that as a youth I can too help our city become better. To this day I feel encouraged to go out and show people the positive in my beautiful city! ~Katherine Hernandez

“I wanted to volunteer for Ciclovía because the city needs a change. We need to change how people view the city of Salinas, and I believe the youth are the key in making this happen. I want to create a community where my siblings can walk to the local park without any worry of violence.” ~Giovanni Napoles

“I would like to change the streets from being something to fear to something friendly and safe. I learned people really do care when they see the youth trying to make a change and trying to get involved in the community. Through Ciclovía, I got to learn more about what’s going on in my community.” ~Antonio Martinez

“Ciclovía means ‘Unity,’ among all of Salinas and neighboring cities. I see Ciclovía as a potential method of changing discrimination and all problems; you see youth working together, taking problems apart. When people see us they see youth and they see we are going to do something good.” ~Manuel Ontiveros

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Steinbeck Innovation

City of Salinas PROJECT THREE

In a direct response to the departure of our community's largest employer (Capital One) in 2012, the Steinbeck Innovation Foundation is galvanizing our region's agricultural industry, educational resources, and innovative drive – not only building local jobs and prosperity, but also cultivating a competitive industry focused on solving the world's food, water and energy-related challenges.

The Steinbeck Innovation Foundation represents the formal structure driving the development of the Steinbeck Innovation Cluster. The world's innovation experts have been focused on Smart Cities. We're shifting that focus to Smart Farms. We see a future for precision agriculture in which our farms will become centers for innovation changing the way we address the world's water, energy, waste and labor challenges. Smart Farms will use the latest technology and smart innovation for a better future.

As world leaders in precision agriculture, we are leveraging our expertise and relationships to create sustainable solutions that address global challenges through the Steinbeck Innovation Cluster. The Steinbeck Innovation Foundation's leadership has built a consortium of partners from Silicon Valley tech and venture capital experts, to local and regional educational institutions, and local business leaders.

The City of Salinas seeded the Cluster in an innovative partnership process, launching an entirely new model for economic growth support by local government leading in partnership with regional business and academic visionaries.

The confluence of education, technology and sustainable agriculture with innovative mechanisms for research, development, and production constitute the essential elements of the Steinbeck Innovation Foundation. This requires better leveraging individual strengths through more robust vocational training as well as through more practically tailored curricula – from elementary school through higher education – based on the needs of the students as well as those of the marketplace.

“Steinbeck Country” represents a region that reaches from Silicon Valley in the North down to the Paso Robles Wine Country in the South. The City of Salinas is nestled almost exactly half way between, along California's historic Highway 101, within 30 minutes drive of the famed coastal cliffs of Carmel-by-the-Sea and the aqua-cultural assets of Moss Landing. Taken as a cohesive whole, Steinbeck Country's unique technology, agriculture, aqua-culture, research, labor, transportation and investment assets make this the ideal launch-point for a new era of economic development for the nation's third largest state.

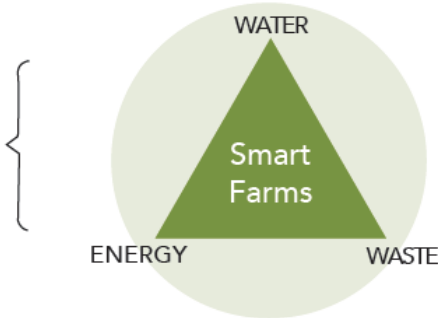
The Steinbeck Innovation Foundation is expanding opportunities for researchers, students and entrepreneurs, and drawing corporate partnership to Steinbeck Country. The organization is run by a Board of Directors with public and private representation. Initiatives all stem from close partnerships with regional and national leaders in academia and the corporate sector. Guidance also comes through the Steinbeck Committee – a high-level task force with representatives from a diverse array of our area's business, nonprofit, and governmental organizations.

The strategy and concept of the Steinbeck Innovation Cluster was largely inspired by the work of CAPT Wayne Porter, USN, co-author of “A National Strategic Narrative.” Expanding upon concepts of industrial clusters (first proposed by Harvard economist Michael Porter) and modern system science, CAPT Porter has asserted that the Central Coast / Salinas Valley (Steinbeck Country) has most of the key characteristics found in successful industrial clusters internationally – a confluence of academic and research institutions, a strong core commercial competency, institutions of higher learning to support an educated labor and professional base, a strong community with positive work ethic, and investment capital interested in technological growth.

\$1 million in pledges have been made by local, private companies such as Taylor Farms, JV Smith Companies, and Mann Packing to support Steinbeck Innovation programs.



Strategic Focus



BUILDING THE STEINBECK INNOVATION CLUSTER
 As world leaders in precision agriculture, we will leverage our expertise and relationships to create sustainable solutions that address global challenges.

Steinbeck Cluster

INNOVATION	ACCELERATION	INVESTMENT	CORPORATE
<i>Building Innovative Capacity</i> Youth Programs Tech Education Entrepreneurial Training Advanced Research	<i>Startup Incubation</i> Infrastructure Professional Services Networking Mentorship	<i>Innovation Fund</i> Venture Capital Financing Angel Investing	<i>Strategic Corporate Engagement</i> Innovation Investment Partnership

Structure

ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE	INNOVATION VILLAGE	PARTNERSHIPS
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Steinbeck Innovation's Coder Dojo Steinbeck Country

According to the Department of Education, between 2010 - 2020 the number of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) jobs will increase by 17%. There are two Science and Technology job openings for every job seeker. Only 8% of all certificates and degrees awarded in STEM fields are for Hispanics even though they represent 16% of the U.S. population. Salinas wants to change this for our youth and provide them with advanced opportunities.

CoderDojo is a global network of free, volunteer-led, independent, community based programming clubs for young people. Youth learn how to code, develop websites, apps, programs, games and explore technology in a creative environment. In addition to learning to code, attendees meet like minded people and get to show off what they've been working on. There is a focus on community, peer learning, youth mentoring and self led learning with an emphasis on openness, helping others and showing how coding is a force for change in the world.

CoderDojo Steinbeck Country is an Educational Partnership Program by Steinbeck Innovation Foundation and Hartnell College. The "Dojo" is unique in that it consists of a 6 session module; At the end of the module students obtain a certificate of completion. All computers and other technology are provided and the students are invited to attend relevant, experiential field trips to Silicon Valley. Operating out of Hartnell College - Alisal Campus in East Salinas, the bulk of volunteers are college students from Hartnell and CSUMB. Programming also takes place at various elementary schools as well as Millennium Charter High School.

CoderDojo Steinbeck Country is in its third year of programming. This past year there were 307 participants: 60% boys, 54% Hispanic/Latino. The groundwork has been laid to increase capacity by 50% this year.

"It's really important that our students are prepared to meet some great future opportunities."
~Dennis Donohue, Steinbeck Innovation Foundation

"In the future I want to pursue a technological career so this is helping me reach that goal."
~Marco Pizarro, 13 years old

"I'm working on an app that will notify you when your plants need watering." ~Corinne Harris, 15 years old

"There are job opportunities! If students at a very young age know how to code, of course they're gonna be ahead of the game." ~Maggie Melone, CoderDojo Program Director

Steinbeck Innovation's FastTrac® NewVenture™ Program

The Steinbeck Innovation FastTrac® NewVenture™ Program is a program of the Steinbeck Innovation Foundation, led by SVG Partners and supported by funding from the City of Salinas.

There's no substitute for experience. The eight-week intensive program takes aspiring and early stage entrepreneurs through a series of courses and hands-on workshops building business

competency and exploring the viability of their individual business models. The sessions also incorporate general business acumen, network building, and presentation skills.

Steinbeck Innovation FastTrac® NewVenture™ Program participants:

- Explore entrepreneurship
- Identify and meet market needs
- Objectively evaluate business concepts and plans for moving forward
- Develop a working knowledge of business fundamentals such as marketing, product/service development, management, and financials
- Begin building infrastructure, and business operations and processes
- Explore the risk and success factors in the marketplace
- Understand how to access the human, financial, and business resources
- Network with entrepreneurs and professionals
- Respond to changes that can impact business
- Build an actionable business plan

With full scholarships available to Salinas residents, 15 of the 22 participants in 2014 were male. And, all are well on their way in launching new business ventures.

“I’ve really clarified the mission of my business.” ~Ellen Wrona

“Before I came here, I was all over the place. My efforts are now focused.” ~Osbaldo Lucero

“My networking skills are far superior to what they were previously, and I’ve been able to extend my net.” ~Stephen Hernandez

“My ideas are moving forward to what I want.” ~Tony Saber

“Guest speakers really taught me to not give up when the going gets tough.” ~Paul Fuller

“Not a lot of people get the opportunity to pitch their ideas before Venture Capitalist! We are so honored.” ~Jessica Landa

“Time to go get our business license.” ~Maria and Fernando Negrón

Steinbeck Innovation’s Partnership with SVG Partner’s Thrive Accelerator Program

“In the next 40 years, farmers will have to grow as much food as they have in the last 10,000 years - combined.” ~Norman Borlaug, The World Food Prize

We have experienced substantial changes in growing conditions over the last years. It is clear that time-tested agricultural practices are no longer sufficient for an expanding population, and we must be smarter and more efficient using increasingly scarce resources such as water. The intersection of agricultural and technical science is rapidly improving yields and efficiencies; The initiatives to link agricultural innovators with technology innovators will yield substantial benefits for both the population and the planet.

The most monumental demographic shift in history is taking place right now. By the year 2050, the population will increase to 9 billion people while the world’s middle class will increase from

1.5 billion to 4.5 billion. To meet future food demands, global production will have to increase by 70% and applying technology will be the key.

Thrive Accelerator is a highly selective mentorship and investment program for technology-enabled startups in the Precision Agriculture space. Ten startup companies have been selected to gather and connect in the Salinas area for mentorship, collaboration, and direct access to the top fresh agriculture companies in the world.

With the support and partnership of Steinbeck Innovation, SVG Partners launched the accelerator last year. More than 40 companies from around the world applied for the ten spots.

To help deploy their innovative new technologies, each participating company is receiving:

- Support from and access to the Steinbeck Innovation Cluster's vast global network of mentors from Silicon Valley and the Salinas Valley — an amazing collection of entrepreneurs, investors, and innovators interested in helping participating companies succeed
- Dedicated Steinbeck Innovation Cluster working space
- Mentor support from key executives and leaders, other agriculture industry leaders, venture capitalists, and the broader entrepreneurial community
- Access to the top R&D staff from the largest fresh Ag companies in the world
- An Investor Demo Day, held at the National Steinbeck Center, where each company will present their team and product to agriculture leaders and investors; with the chance at up to \$5 million in funding.

Lorri Koster, Chairman and CEO of Mann Packing, is mentor to Cal Safe Soil. Mann Packing is a grower, shipper and processor with a 75 year history in the Salinas Valley. It's also one of the country's leading suppliers of fresh vegetables. Koster has helped Cal Safe Soil with things like refining their pitch for growers and making connections with them.

And that gets to the big dream here in Salinas. *"The bottom line is we want to be that point of intersection where fresh food and technology intersect for the planet."* ~Dennis Donohue, Steinbeck Innovation Foundation

"Forbes Reinventing America: The AgTech Summit" with Steinbeck Innovation

Forbes, in partnership with SVG Partners and the Steinbeck Innovation Cluster will host "Forbes Reinventing America: The AgTech Summit" in the Salinas Valley in July 2015. This event will bring together several hundred of the smartest minds in Silicon Valley and global agriculture in the Salinas Valley to tackle some of the world's most critical challenges. From biotech and precision farming to big data's role in feeding a planet of eight billion people, the summit will explore topics at the core of this vital trend, and promises to be the definitive gathering for leaders at the intersection of technology and agriculture.

"This is a great win for the Steinbeck Innovation Cluster, for the Ag Industry and for the Salinas Valley, the emerging AgTech capital of the nation." ~Joe Gunter, Mayor of Salinas

"The goal of the AgTech Summit is to convene influential thought leaders to find innovative solutions to some of the world's most critical farming challenges, and there's no better place for this event than in the Salinas Valley, where tech entrepreneurs from Silicon Valley and experts from the global hub of agriculture intersect." ~Mike Federle, Forbes

“We are delighted to partner with Forbes to create a global agriculture and technology summit that’s focused on twenty-first-century challenges and opportunities related to food, water, energy and innovation in sustainability.” ~John Hartnett, SVG Partners

“This summit is a fantastic opportunity for the AgTech community to discuss real solutions in accelerating new technologies and capabilities in farming.” ~Bruce Taylor, Taylor Farms

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Hoop dreams fulfilled at Salinas' Closter Park

by Jay Dunn 7:17 a.m. PST February 25, 2015

All new hoops, pristine blacktop and clean white lines greeted kids Tuesday afternoon at the grand opening of the Closter Park Basketball Courts in Salinas. The event was attended by a number of city representatives, including Mayor Joe Gunter, City Council members Tony Barrera and Gloria De La Rosa, Public Works Director Gary Petersen, and numerous officials including a delegation of firefighters.

Enhancements to the court area include metal bleachers, safer crosswalks and ADA pedestrian ramps around the park, plus new engineered wood fiber chips and an upgraded drainage system to avoid flooding in the playground area. The project was paid for with \$420,000 of Measure V funds, and designed and constructed by two Salinas-based firms, Belli Architectural Group and Nor Cal Contractor.



Excited children crowded around Mayor Gunter for the ribbon-cutting, and soon were happily setting up to play full-court games. "I wouldn't have played here before," said Salvador Galindo, 11, who came from the Breadbox Recreation Center with a number of his friends. "Better courts, new fences, new painting, it's just much better now."

Salinas, California Upgrades Public Admin System After 30 Years

§ civsourceonline.com/2015/02/24/salinas-california-upgrades-public-admin-system-after-30-years/

February 24, 2015 · by Staff Report · in ERP , Featured , Legacy Systems , Procurement , Solutions , Technology , Workforce

For anyone who claims government is all about waste, consider Salinas, California which just upgraded its homegrown 30-year-old public administration system. The city went with New World Systems for the upgrade which includes financial management, human resources, community development, and business process changes that will bring the city into the new century.

The new system will eliminate a largely paper-based process with something that is both digital and automated. According to Finance Director for the city of Salinas, Matt Pressey – the decision to go with New World was based on 15 site visits to neighboring communities already using Logos.NET and positive feedback received from those municipalities.

Salinas has a population of more than 155,000 and is the county seat for Monterey County.

The city hopes to improve government transparency and service delivery with the automation of more of its workflows as well.

Upgrades to city systems are becoming more common as old homegrown systems reach the end of their workable lifestyle. New York City [recently moved off of mainframe computers](#) to a more modern system in its finance department.



Farmer workers given small plots of land for their own organic farms

UPDATED 12:22 PM PST Feb 23, 2015

SALINAS, Calif. -

Victor Cortes has worked hard in the Pajaro Valley's agricultural fields for nearly 15 years.

Now, Cortes wants to use his rigorous work ethic differently, by working on his own farm.

He's accomplishing his goal with help from the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association.

"I've been looking around with the big companies, that is not my future. I want a family company, where I can spend time on the farm with my family, with my kids," Cortes said.

[VIDEO: Victor Cortes and Stevie Hall start their own farms](#)

"For me, ALBA is a huge opportunity to do my dream. Otherwise it's almost impossible to start so little," Cortes said.

ALBA gives aspiring farmers small pieces of the best farmland in the world, a luxury hard to afford, and even harder to find.

The program allows 40 farmers the chance to grow on 90 acres off of Old Stage Road near Salinas.

"Usually low income, Latino immigrants, who often work in the fields, and it helps them pursue their dream of starting their own farm, having their own business and this program helps them launch the business and learn all aspects of it," ALBA executive director Chris Brown said.

All of the small farms are organic, and many of the farmers growing there want something more for themselves and their families.

Stevie Hall is among the local growers who dreamed of having his own farm. When he heard about the ALBA program has a Hartnell student, he immediately enrolled.

"I saw ALBA as a class that was being offered and I was like why not get college credit and also be able to become a farmer at the same time? You've gotta go through a pretty extensive course for 8 months that teaches you marketing to production to irrigation to food safety. After you complete the 8 month program they lease you a quarter or half acre and then you can increase your acreage," Hall said.

He got his start on four-and-a-half acres through ALBA, and has established Hall's Organic Farms.

Brown said about 30 students begin classes each season, and a dozen continue to farm within the program. Others take their knowledge back to their original jobs, immediately go out on their own, or go back to school for more education. Students who stay get to rent equipment and lease ground at reduced rates.

"They're learning about organic production, learning about marketing, writing business plans and doing financials, and getting out there on the demo plot," Brown explains.

And one of the most important aspect of ALBA: it gives newcomers a place to sell their crops.

"To expect them to market their perishable produce by knocking on doors, its just too much. So we decided a key service for us to provide here is to help them, so we have a warehouse on the property," Brown said.

For Cortes, he hopes reaching his goals will have many benefits for his family: namely, widening the world for his children, who often help him in the fields. Even if some days their help means they eat most of what they pick, or dig paths for water in the soft dirt.

"That is the main thing, to grow with them, share what I do and they are going to see what is the real job, the real life, so if they don't like the field they have to find another thing to do, or school or whatever they are going to decide. I think this is the window to see the world for them," Cortes said.

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Salinas Valley salad bar campaign rolls on

By Chris Koger March 20, 2014 | 3:30 pm EDT

SALINAS, Calif. — The Grower-Shipper Association Foundation's drive for school salad bars in Monterey County, which has started to focus more on older students, paused momentarily for its latest donation — to Sacred Heart School.

The Salinas school serves children from transitional kindergarten to the eighth grade.

"We set out to fund a salad bar for every school in Monterey County and we're just about there," Margaret D'Arrigo-Martin, vice president of community development for Taylor Farms, said at the March 19 dedication. "We're working our way up to middle school and high school now because we've been able to get most of the elementary schools who wanted a salad bar."

She began the foundation's I Love Salad program about 18 months ago when she was chairwoman of the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California.

"We rolled it out statewide last year and we've raised over \$475,000 for California, and now we're doing the Midwest," D'Arrigo-Martin said, referring to the broader Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools campaign.

The local program has donated 30 in Monterey County and has a goal of 10 each year. "We're applying for some local grants and U.S. (Department of Agriculture) grants to make that happen, and I'm sure the generosity of the grower-shipper community will continue," she said.

Sponsors for the Sacred Heart salad bar include Taylor Farms, D'Arrigo Bros. Co. of California, Mann Packing Co., Tanimura & Antle, Steinbeck Country Produce and Blazer Wilkinson.

The school plans to have it available to students Monday through Wednesday this year and extend that next year.

"Other companies will be donating seasonal produce to our salad bar for the rest of this year and next year," a school spokeswoman said.

"A lot of the companies are donating produce to Sacred Heart and other schools," D'Arrigo-Martin said. "The Grower-Shipper Association tries to be a produce solution for the schools by linking them up with growers so that they can get product locally. Sacred Heart wants to buy all their produce locally and have it all fresh. No frozen and no canned."