

# 30<sup>th</sup> GALA



APRIL 24, 2026 • 6 PM • THE INN AT SPANISH BAY

**Celebrating 30 Years of  
Leadership & Impact**



Welcome

Dear Friends,

For three decades, MCBC has been honored to stand alongside businesses and partners who drive Monterey County's economy and shape the future of our region. Your leadership and steadfast commitment to community and economic prosperity for all are what make this work meaningful.

Tonight, we gather not only to mark 30 years of MCBC, but to recognize the innovation, collaboration, and resiliency that define our business community. Through times of opportunity we continue to adapt and move forward together.

This evening, we celebrate the individuals and organizations whose leadership and impact inspire us. We are grateful you are here to share in this moment.

Thank you for being an essential part of the MCBC community and for helping lay the foundation as we continue building a dynamic, diverse, and prosperous Monterey County.

I hope you enjoy the evening. There is indeed much to celebrate.

**JEFF RUSTER**  
Executive Director



## TONIGHT'S EMCEES



**MITCHELL FRIEDMAN**  
Leadership Monterey County  
Naval Postgraduate School



**HELEN DE YOUNG**  
MCBC Director  
Monterey County Bank

# Bon Appetit

## SALAD

**MIZUNA AND ROASTED BEETS**  
with Crumbled Goat Cheese, Pine Nuts  
Honey Sherry Vinaigrette

## ENTREE

**STUFFED CHICKEN, ROASTED PEPPER  
AND GOAT CHEESE**  
accompanied with Charred Broccolini, Whipped  
Potatoes, & Balsamic Reduction

## DESSERT

**PEANUT BUTTER CRUNCH CAKE**  
with Milk Chocolate Bavarian, Salted Caramel  
Coffee & Tea Service

## BRAVO

We sincerely appreciate the **Pebble Beach Company** for their partnership, continued support of Monterey County Business Council, and exceptional efforts in making tonight a memorable event.

EXECUTIVE CHEF      CATERING MANAGER  
David Duron          Lauren Pavao

SOUS CHEF            BANQUET CAPTAIN  
Troy Barnum         Raul Valdez

PRODUCTION        FLORAL DESIGN  
Eric Moore            Heidi Williams Sisco  
Daniel Nimmo & Team



PEBBLE BEACH  
COMPANY



## THANK YOU

Your presence made the evening truly special, and we are grateful for your support. Thank you for your commitment to our mission—we look forward to celebrating with you again next year!

## PROGRAM

6:00 PM Reception  
7:00 PM Welcome  
7:15 PM Dinner Service  
8:00 PM Awards Presentation



Let's Celebrate



# Celebrating Our Work

# 30<sup>th</sup>



The MCBC team supports local businesses and drives economic development through the following programs:

- **MONTEREY BAY APEX ACCELERATOR (APEX)**  
Helping businesses pursue and secure government contracts through no-cost advising, technical support, and training.
- **LEADERSHIP MONTEREY COUNTY (LMC)**  
Building future leaders through a 10-month program focused on local industry sectors, civic engagement, and community collaboration.
- **SOUTH SALINAS VALLEY BROADBAND AUTHORITY (SSVBA)** This five-municipality joint powers authority works to secure funding and expand affordable, reliable broadband access for Monterey County residents—especially in unserved and underserved communities.
- **MONARCH SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SBDC)** Providing no-cost expert business advising, workshops, access to capital, and other resources.
- **BUILDING BUSINESS BACK (BBB)**  
In partnership with the County of Monterey, BBB provides free, multilingual services with a focus on businesses in unincorporated areas and those that are minority-, women-, and LGBTQ+-owned.



# Celebrating Our Sponsors

# 30<sup>th</sup>



## MONTAGE Health

**Montage Health** is a nonprofit healthcare system rooted in Monterey County, dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the communities it serves. With a strong commitment to community partnership and innovation, **Montage Health** works to ensure residents have access to high-quality care, education, and resources that support a healthier region.

# RAYNE

## TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

**Rayne Technology Solutions** has been serving the Monterey Bay business community since 2008, providing trusted IT support, cybersecurity, and technology consulting to organizations across the region. Through responsive service and long-term partnerships, **Rayne Technology Solutions** is proud to support the success and growth of the local business community.


**AI Is Powerful.  
Trust Makes It Work.**


*A practical guide to responsible AI adoption.*

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### GOLD SPONSORS

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**Enhanced Pathways for Intergrated Care**

**Kaiser Permanente**

**Monterey Peninsula College**

**Pebble Beach Company**

**Scudder Roofing**

### SILVER SPONSORS

**Alvarez Technology Group**

**Big Sur Land Trust**

**California American Water**

**Central Coast Community Energy**

**City of Salinas**

**Community Bridges**

**Community Foundation**

**County of Monterey**

**CSU Monterey Bay**

**Fenton & Keller**

**Monterey Bay Aquarium**

**Monterey Peninsula Engineering**

**Steinbruner Hill CPAs**

**West Coast Community Bank**

# Leadership & Impact

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT: DAN BALDWIN**

For creating tangible, positive outcomes that strengthen quality of life and foster connection, collaboration, and resilience across the region, positively impacting residents during times of need.

## **EMERGING LEADER: TEDDY BALESTRERI JR.**

Recognized for his growing leadership and forward-thinking contributions to one of Monterey County's most iconic destinations, and for his commitment to stewardship, community partnership, and economic vitality that helps position Cannery Row and our region for continued success.

## **CHANGE MAKER: BIG SUR LAND TRUST**

Thank you for modeling and reshaping how land conservation, access, and stewardship are approached in our region. Through visionary leadership and community partnership, this organization has protected iconic landscapes, expanded public access to open space, and advanced climate resilience—creating lasting environmental and community benefits for generations.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE: CITY OF MARINA & MONTEREY PENINSULA ENGINEERING**

Recognized for exceptional collaboration and leadership in delivering the Imjin Parkway Widening and Roundabout Project. Their partnership in the successful design and early completion of the project has enhanced safety, improved traffic flow, and supported long-term sustainability.

## **VISIONARY: ROXANNE WILSON**

Recognized for her visionary leadership in addressing homelessness in South Monterey County and beyond. Through partnerships, compassion, and dedication, her work has expanded access to housing, supportive services, and coordinated care—making a meaningful difference for individuals and families in need.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: CITY OF SALINAS & BRUCE TAYLOR**

For their collaborative leadership in revitalizing Salinas City Center and Oldtown Salinas. Through strategic planning, business attraction, and investment, their partnership has strengthened the local economy, supported job creation, and advanced community-centered growth.

## **LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT: DR. STEVEN PACKER**

Honored for a lifetime of leadership and service dedicated to expanding access to high-quality healthcare across our region. Through his work with CHOMP and Montage Health, Dr. Packer played a pivotal role in strengthening medical services, advancing innovation, and ensuring compassionate care for the community. His legacy of excellence, mentorship, and leadership will continue to shape healthcare in Monterey County for generations to come.





**Dan  
Baldwin**

# Community Impact



*Here for Good*  
**Community  
Foundation**  
for Monterey County

Dan Baldwin has provided transformative leadership to the Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) during his 16-year tenure as President/CEO. Dan has guided a period of remarkable growth and impact, expanding assets from \$130 million to \$475 million and increasing charitable funds from 300 to more than 900. Under his leadership, annual grants grew from \$6 million to \$51 million, while scholarships rose from \$175,000 to \$2 million, expanding opportunities for local students.

He created the COVID-19 Collaborative, championed innovative initiatives including Monterey County Gives!, the VIDA Community Health Worker program and Salinas Inclusive Economic Development Initiative, and launched funds supporting disaster relief, Latino communities, women experiencing homelessness, and more. He expanded the Foundation's countywide presence and strengthened partnerships with donors, nonprofits, businesses and civic leaders.

Known for his ability to bring people and resources together around critical community needs, Dan helped the CFMC grow as a powerful catalyst for healthy, safe, and vibrant communities throughout the region. His leadership, vision and commitment have left a lasting impact.





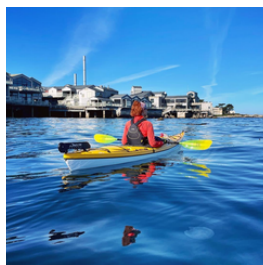
**Teddy  
Balestreri**

## Emerging Leader



Having grown up in the hospitality industry, Theodore Balestreri II is part of a legacy deeply connected to service and a sense of place. A vibrant business and community leader, Balestreri leads hospitality operations of the Cannery Row Company, a family-owned business that has grown to employ 400 people in the Monterey Bay area. His wide-ranging career has included roles in foodservice operations, hotel and restaurant management, and manufacturing of kitchen products. As Executive Vice President of Hospitality Operations and Community Relations, Balestreri oversees a diverse mix of properties, including The Inns of Monterey, The Sardine Factory and Esteban restaurants, and foodservice-based retail.

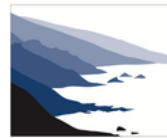
As California Restaurant Association chairman during the COVID-19 pandemic, he represented and advocated for California's 90,000 restaurants and their 1.2 million-person workforce. Appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, Balestreri served proudly on California's Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery. He is a past Chairman of the California Restaurant Association Foundation and, in 2025, was elected to serve as the 107th Chair of the National Restaurant Association. He currently serves on the boards of the Pebble Beach Company Foundation, National Restaurant Association, and Montage Health Foundation.





**Big Sur  
Land Trust**

# Change Maker



**BIG SUR  
LAND TRUST**  
For the lands you love

For nearly 50 years, the Big Sur Land Trust has been redefining what stewardship looks like. Creating access to outdoor experiences that move body and soul. Leading hikes through some of our region's most precious places, and maintaining trails that make those experiences possible. Forging partnerships to connect conserved lands to people, and working with landowners to conserve properties.

In Salinas, a former egg production ranch purchased by Big Sur Land Trust in 2007 now protects wildlife corridors and gives young people a chance to experience the magic of an outdoor day camp, and a partnership with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the California Department of Food and Agriculture is improving soil health and carbon sequestration to mitigate ocean acidification and warming.

A flood-prone area at Carr Lake is being transformed into a central park, bringing precious green space, restoring seasonal wetlands, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Working with partners and donors, Big Sur Land Trust brings meaningful change, having conserved more than 45,000 acres throughout Monterey County since 1978, and inspiring love of lands across generations.





# Infrastructure **IMJIN PARKWAY WIDENING & ROUNDABOUT PROJECT**

When the City of Marina teamed up with Monterey Peninsula Engineering on its Imjin Parkway and Widening Project, it aimed to cut traffic congestion and improve public safety on a 1.7-mile stretch of road that handles 30,000 cars daily. The two-year, \$45 million project expanded the corridor between Reservation and Imjin roads to four lanes, adding roundabouts, bike lanes, a multi-use pathway, lighting, and landscaping, and ultimately creating a more accessible and appealing corridor.

The project was funded through a combination of city development impact fees, Transportation Agency for Monterey County Measure X funds, and funds from SB1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017.

The roundabouts incorporate meaningful artwork with deep connections to the city. Four themes — celebrating stewardship and joy of nature, the connection and play of recreation, beauty and interconnectedness of cultural diversity, and dignity and respect for military history — were chosen by local residents, who shaped the choices through their input and reflections.

Splitting the project into three phases minimized construction impacts and increased efficiencies, while a robust communication strategy kept residents and commuters informed during construction and helped educate drivers on roundabout usage.





# Economic Development

## Downtown Salinas Revitalization

In 2015, Taylor Fresh Foods celebrated the opening of its state-of-the-art headquarters in Downtown Salinas, a deliberate choice by CEO Bruce Taylor to breathe new life into the district. The transformation has energized Main Street, with new boutiques, cafes, eateries, and businesses now supported by Taylor Farms employees. Cultural attractions, such as an art walk, performances, and festivals, are bringing vibrant energy. Much-needed housing within walking distance to workspaces and amenities is reinvigorating the city's core.

It's the heart of Monterey County's largest city, and it continues to evolve as a downtown district full of history, options to dine, shop, work, stay, or play.

Vibrancy doesn't happen by accident: The evolution is fueled by synergy between Taylor's vision and the City of Salinas Strategic Plan, which outlines a roadmap for a thriving, economically vibrant downtown hub. As the city and Taylor Fresh Foods move closer to a new mixed-use development that could bring new multi-family housing units, a hotel, and commercial and retail space to downtown Salinas, the district's future looks brighter than ever.





Roxanne  
Wilson

# Visionary



By bringing together state funding, local leadership, and community partners, County of Monterey’s Homeless Services Director Roxanne Wilson and her team are bringing together state funding, local leadership, and community partners to deliver real, lasting housing solutions.

In recent years, her office has successfully secured and managed nearly \$20 million in California’s Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) to address encampments along the Salinas and Pajaro rivers. Those successes include Sendero Interim Housing, a 16-unit interim housing site in Soledad, funded through a \$4.7 million ERF award, and Watsonville’s HOPE Village, made possible through an \$8 million ERF award, resulting in the development of a 34-bed low-barrier navigation center. Both projects opened in February. In King City, \$6.4 million in ERF funding and a coalition of partners are converting a foreclosed Homekey property into Casa de Esperanza, providing 44 studio apartments with supportive services.

These projects demonstrate how strategic investment and strong partnerships can transform long-standing encampments into pathways to stability and housing. Each project required collaboration between cities, the county, nonprofit service providers, the Housing Authority, and the state.





**Dr. Steven  
Packer**

# Lifetime Achievement

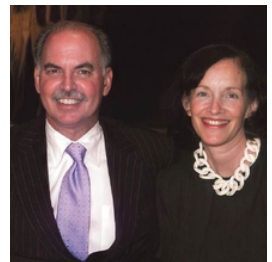
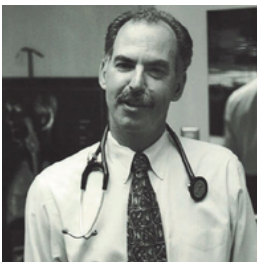


**MONTAGE**  
Health

When vision and perseverance combine, the impact of a single person can be profound. From his early days as a pulmonologist at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula to a 26-year tenure as president and CEO of Montage Health, Dr. Steven Packer has demonstrated a commitment to excellence, mentorship, and patient-centered leadership that has shaped healthcare in Monterey County for the better.

Because of his leadership, students have pathways to move into high-impact healthcare careers. Families can access critically needed mental health resources for their kids. Women can receive first-rate breast care when they need it most. Our community has greater access — in their own neighborhoods— to urgent care and wellness centers. Public-private partnerships are growing the healthcare workforce and expanding opportunities for medical professionals, creating more resilient teams, and attracting and retaining qualified talent.

Recently retired, Dr. Packer guided the organization from a single hospital to a 3,000-person integrated regional healthcare system with more than \$1.1 billion in annual net revenue. Now CEO Emeritus, he remains active in the region as a corporate and non-profit board member and community volunteer.





# Team Members



**JEFF RUSTER**

Executive Director  
Monterey County Business Council



**JENNY MCADAMS**

Director of Operations, MCBC  
Executive Director, LMC



**JOSE LUIS BARAJAS**

Programs Manager, SBDC & BBB  
Executive Director, SSVBA



**VICTOR VALDEZ**

Program Manager  
Monterey Bay APEX Accelerator



**RHONDA DEVITO**

Procurement Counselor  
Monterey Bay APEX Accelerator



**JORDAN CABALLERO**

Procurement Counselor  
Monterey Bay APEX Accelerator



**KADY EL-AYOUBI**  
Project Support



**MITCHELL FRIEDMAN**  
Facilitator, LMC



**MARIE VASARI**  
Content Strategist



**LAURA PRUNEDA**  
Special Projects

**MEGAN HUNTER**

Board Chair  
City of Soledad



**LUIS ALVAREZ**

Vice Chair  
Alvarez Technology Group



**AMY IVEY**

Secretary  
Amy Ivey Consulting



**CHRIS STEINBRUNER**

Treasurer  
Steinbruner Hill, CPAs



**PETE SCUDDER**

Director  
Scudder Roofing & Scudder Solar



**SUN SHINE HOHMAN**

Director  
West Coast Community Bank



**HELEN DE YOUNG**

Director  
Monterey County Bank



# Board Members



**LEADERSHIP**  
MONTEREY COUNTY

# Board Members

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Board Chair  
Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce



## **BRAD LEVANG**

Vice Chair  
Fenton & Keller



## **JEANA ARNOLD**

Secretary  
Pacific Gas & Electric Company



## **MANNY ESCARCEGA**

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## **TENCIA VARGAS**

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City of Soledad



## **NICK KITE**

Director  
Montage Health



**LEADERSHIP**  
MONTEREY COUNTY



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Board President  
County of Monterey



**MAYOR MIKE LEBARRE**

Vice President  
City of King City



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Director  
City of Greenfield



**MAYOR JOSE RIOS**

Director  
City of Gonzales



**COUNCILMEMBER BEN CALDERA**

Director  
City of Soledad



**THANK YOU**

Thank you to our dedicated volunteer Board members for your time, leadership, and service. Your commitment to our mission and community makes this work possible, and we are grateful for all that you do.



**Board Members**





MONTEREY COUNTY  
BUSINESS  
COUNCIL

# Gala Partners



MONTEREY COUNTY  
BUSINESS  
COUNCIL

# THANK YOU



Thank you to the **County of Monterey** and the **Board of Supervisors** for their continued support of our work and economic development efforts across the County. As a DSA partner, we collaborate to provide free services to entrepreneurs and small businesses. Their investment ensures our programs remain accessible to businesses of all sizes and stages, strengthening our local economy for all.

Many thanks to the **Sustainable Hospitality & Tourism Management** scholars who volunteered at this evening's event. Consider supporting our Otter Alum by hiring graduates, offering internships, and providing mentorship opportunities. Supporting our Otters strengthens our community and helps keep talented graduates in our local workforce.



Thank you for the beautiful music and joy your talented youth musicians shared this evening. **Palenke Arts** continues to open doors—providing access to the arts, building community, and ensuring programs remain affordable and accessible, including at no cost for those who need it most.



# THANK YOU

We extend our sincere gratitude to the pioneering founders of Monterey County Business Council, whose vision and dedication elevated our region and brought meaningful awareness to the importance of economic development and innovation. Their legacy continues to shape our work and inspire a more dynamic and prosperous Monterey County.

David Armanasco, Armanasco Public Relations

Mike Chihak, The Californian

Meg Connors, Victorian Homecare

Dennis Donovan, Dole, Inc.

Sam Downing, Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System

Myron "Doc" Etienne, Noland, Hamerly, Etienne & Hoss

Lewis Fenton, Fenton & Keller

Larry Foy, California American Water

David Gill, Growers Express

Vern Horton, First National Bank

Jay Hudson, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula

MaryAnn Leffel, Wells Fargo Bank

Ernie Lostrom, Lostrom & Company

Dan McGilloway, Jr., Kasavan, Pope & McGilloway

Basil Mills, Mills Family Farms

Mike Morgan, Household Credit Services

Elizabeth Murdoch, KSBW

Peter Smith, CSUMB

Richard Smith, Valley Farm Management

Rob Stump, PG&E

Reid Wagstaff, Smuckers Co.

Tom Wilson, Monterey Surgery Center

Jack Van Zander, Bestor Engineers

Est.  
1995



Our Founders





**LET'S  
CONTINUE  
OUR WORK  
TOGETHER**



**MCBC.biz**