



Santa Maria Valley ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

December 2025 | Prepared for the Community of Santa
Maria



Introduction

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce is proud to present our Monthly Economic Impact Report for December 2025, highlighting ongoing efforts to support business growth, workforce development, tourism promotion, and community engagement throughout the region. This month, we celebrated the return of the Annual Hispanic Business Alliance Posadas Mixer, a festive community event that brought together local leaders and business owners. The event was a major success, hosting 315 attendees and fostering meaningful connections across the Valley.

Throughout December, the Chamber engaged in a wide range of programs, initiatives, and outreach efforts. Membership remained strong with 815 total members and a 92.3% retention rate. Networking remained active through weekly "Build Your Business" events and ribbon cuttings, while outreach through the Hispanic Business Group continued with 225 members receiving dedicated educational and networking support.

Tourism remained a key focus, with the tourism website driving 44,754 visits and 743 hotel referrals. While lodging inventory remains temporarily reduced due to property remodeling, year-to-date Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) totals reached \$3,049,636.99, showing a positive increase over the previous year. Workforce development efforts advanced through NextGen CEO graduation, teacher tours, and Leadership Santa Maria Valley programming focused on youth and education.

The Chamber remains closely connected to local government and regional partners through 21 events and meetings this month. This report highlights the Chamber's continued role in supporting local industries, strengthening workforce pipelines, promoting tourism, and advancing the economic vitality of the Santa Maria Valley.

Table of Contents

Economic Development.....	1
Providing Business Support.....	2-4
Tourism.....	5-7
Workforce Development.....	8
Community Involvement.....	9
Media Mentions.....	10

Economic Development



Providing Business Support

Chamber Membership



815
Members



2
New Members



92.3%
Retention Rate

Networking Opportunities

384

Networking Event Participants

This includes the Chamber's weekly Build Your Business networking events, ribbon cuttings, and the HBA Posadas Mixer.



Providing Business Support

Local Business Spotlight

In this month's Local Business Spotlight, we sat down with Reda Kchik, Owner of The Garden Restaurant & Cafe, to learn about his family's dream of sharing real, homemade Mediterranean food with Santa Maria. Reda shares the story of how his friends encouraged him to open the restaurant after enjoying his cooking, and how the dream became a reality when he found the perfect location in 2015. Discover how The Garden Restaurant & Cafe focuses on fresh, authentic food and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Learn about their commitment to the community through their fun events like weekend buffets and karaoke nights, and how the support from Santa Maria has been truly meaningful.



Business & Government Roundtable

The roundtable included a discussion on the Chamber hosting a Candidate Academy to support civic engagement and leadership development.



Business Editorial

In this month's editorial, Jennifer Harrison, the Chamber's Vice President of Marketing and Communications, discusses the return of Restaurant Month and its vital impact on our local economy. She highlights how "Dine Out Santa Maria Style" encourages residents to support the small businesses that give the Valley its character while helping restaurants thrive during a traditionally slower season. Full editorial can be found on the news section of our website, Santamariavalley.com



Providing Business Support

Hispanic Business Support

The Chamber's Economic Development department helps support Hispanic business outreach efforts through the Hispanic Business Group, which organizes educational and networking events.



Annual Posadas
Mixer:
315
Attendees

Additional Activities & Events

- CA legislative & Economic Development Outlook (12/3)
- Herencia Indegnina Cultural Awareness (12/10)
- BMW Posadas Mixer Walk Through Rehearsal (12/10)
- Placer.ai Webinar (12/16)
- Committee Selection Meeting (12/17)
- Meeting w/ local Hispanic Media (12/18)



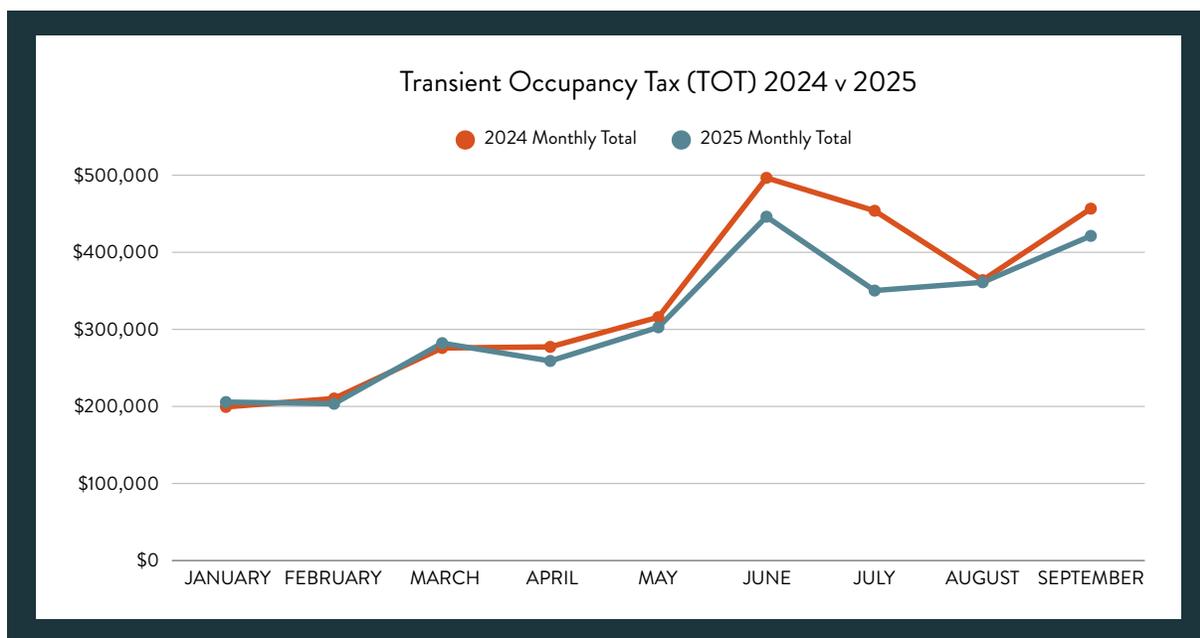
Tourism

Transient Occupancy Tax Data

The latest TOT report (through September 2025) shows \$421,315.01 collected for the month, compared with \$456,660.17 in September 2024. Year-to-date (Jan-Sep) totals are \$3,049,636.99 vs. \$2,831,920.21 last year.

The report (through September 2025) continues to reflect the temporary impact of reduced lodging inventory while several properties are offline for remodeling - a positive sign of reinvestment that will strengthen the visitor experience and support future growth as upgraded rooms return to market. Even with this short-term constraint, we remain focused on sustaining demand and positioning Santa Maria Valley for a strong rebound as inventory comes back online. Additionally, the 0.5% assessment increase will help offset any near-term softness by protecting resources for destination marketing and sales efforts that drive overnight stays and long-term revenue.

Month	2025 Monthly Totals	2024 Monthly Totals	Monthly Percentage Change
January	\$205,657.77	\$199,345.75	+3.17%
February	\$203,468.55	\$210,286.10	-3.24%
March	\$282,109.55	\$275,837.25	+2.27%
April	\$258,990.80	\$277,268.38	-6.59%
May	\$302,702.66	\$315,838.18	-4.16%
June	\$446,209.44	\$496,629.02	-10.15%
July	\$350,359.24	\$453,920.91	-22.81%
August	\$361,107.19	\$363,851.23	-0.75%
September	\$421,315.01	\$456,660.17	-7.74%



Tourism

Website Traffic

Our tourism website (santamariavalley.com) remains a strong driver for hotel referrals.

44,754 Website Visits

743 Website Hotel Referrals



Brochure & Visitor Guide Distribution



105

Visitor guides distributed to local hotels, businesses and through Certified Folder Display placements



105

Wine guides and maps distributed to local hotels, businesses and through Certified Folder Display placements

"The Chamber promotes a lot of activities that help small businesses like ours get more exposure. The communication and support are awesome. The monthly Mixer Events that they hold bring the local business owners/establishments together and helps in promoting camaraderie in the community. The Chamber of Commerce team is consistently accommodating in every dealings we have made with them."

- Gail Saiz, CEO/Co-Owner, SMI HVAC Services

Tourism

Trade Shows & Industry Partner Events

2025 Seasonal Spectacular:

Jennifer Harrison, Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Jennifer Ayala, Marketing Coordinator, Robert Cooks, General Manager of Best Western Plus Big America, and Scott Shute, General Manager of the historic Santa Maria Inn, attended the 2025 Seasonal Spectacular, a premier West Coast networking event hosted by Associations West (formerly CalSAE). This event was scheduled on December 16–17, 2025, in Sacramento, CA. It featured an expansive holiday-themed trade show, the EXCHANGE 1:1 appointment show, and educational sessions for association professionals.

Group Leads & details

Western Association of Chamber Executives:

The WACE was inviting proposals from member Chambers interested in hosting a meeting of the WACE Board of Directors in October 2026. Molly Alves submitted a proposal, and the Radisson Hotel Santa Maria will host the group of 30 to 35 people, providing a block of 30 rooms.



Workforce Development

Teacher Tours

Melfred Borzall & City Transit: “Build, Move, Make: Explore how innovative ideas become reality through design, construction, manufacturing, & delivery.”



Next Gen CEO

Graduation- December 19, 2025
Launch day December 15, 2025



Workforce and Development Board

Moving from planning to action, workSBC is launching a coordinated workforce system for Santa Barbara County in 2026. The initiative focuses on formalizing partner accountability, aligning education with industry needs, and simplifying career pathways for the community. Success will be driven by foundational tools and active participation in collaborative working groups. This shift ensures a streamlined, accessible ecosystem designed for long-term regional impact.



Leadership Santa Maria Valley

LSMV’s December topic day was about Youth & Education. After gathering at CoastHills and hearing from Megan Evans on Coaching & Mentoring, we traveled to Allan Hancock College and heard from Dr. Kevin Walthers about the college. We were given a tour of the campus by Dr. Jon Hooten. In the afternoon we traveled to Guadalupe to hear about what the Boys & Girls Club is doing with the youth there. The next tour was the Guadalupe Dunes Center where we learned about what youth programs they offer. There were 18 people in attendance.



Advocacy and Addressing Housing Needs

Advocacy and Support Letters

- SB Vintners Association



Housing Project	Support Provided
Modular home development support	Connection with city for alignment

Community Involvement

Local Meetings & Events

The Chamber's Economic Development department stays actively involved in the community to build relationships and understand the needs of local businesses and the community.

Economic & Community Development

- SMX Board of Directors meeting
- City Council meeting
- Impact Fee meeting
- Ecosystem Mapping Workforce Convening
- REACH Practitioners Network
- Industry Tour at Hardy Diagnostics

Business Support

- Letter of Support SB Vintners Association
- Santa Maria Town center discussion
- Local developer – development discussion
- Partners in Education Board Meeting

Community Events

- Rotary Christmas Parade
- Hispanic Business Alliance Posadas Mixer
- NextGen CEO Alumni Holiday Popup
- NextGen CEO Business Launch Day
- Nextgen CEO Graduation



Chamber Media Mentions

Topic	Publication
Chamber Spotlight	Santa Maria Times
Small Business Campaign	KEYT
Small Business Campaign	KSBY
Civics Bee	Santa Maria Times

Tourism Media Mentions

Topic	Publication
Wine	Baltimore Sun SoCal Restaurant Show Visit California
Santa Maria Style Barbecue	MSN Philippines Food Republic AOL
Travel	TravelMole





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