
Unlocking Potential: Navigating Opportunities for Small Chambers

small CHAMBERS. **BIG** OPPORTUNITIES.



Western Association
of Chamber Executives

Josh Cross

CEO Atascadero Chamber



Western Association
of Chamber Executives

Why Are We Here?

Lynsey Hansen – Morro Bay Chamber
Julie Matthews – Atascadero Chamber
Jim Dantona – San Luis Obispo Chamber



Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce



Lynsey Hansen

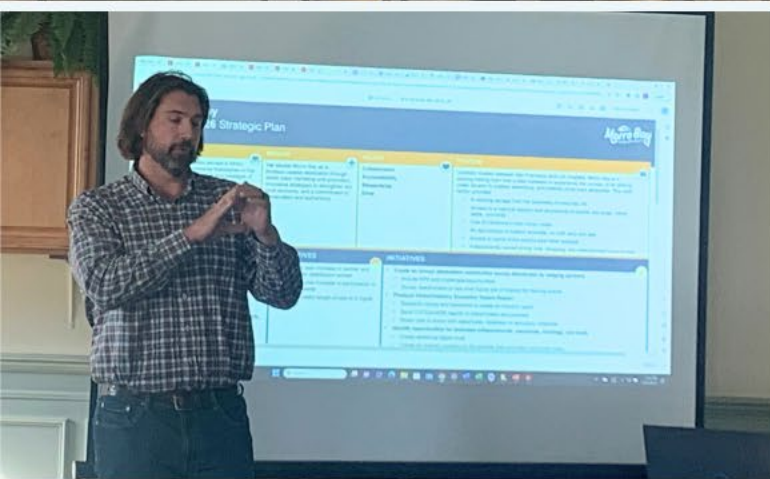
Membership Director

- Morro Bay, CA
- Population - 11,228
- 310 Members

small CHAMBERS. BIG OPPORTUNITIES.



How do we know what our members need?



Listening Tour- What and Why

- **4 business districts = 4 Tour dates and Report Out Meetings**
- **Invite Members, Non-Members, City Leadership, and Elected Officials**
- **Supports City Contract, guides programing, identifies problems and solutions**
- **Connects City directly with local business owners**

Listening Tour Report Out

DOWNTOWN 6.8.22 AT PIZZA PORT

"Either decide you're going to be a business district, or not"

NEW BUSINESSES

- Amber Waves, Out of the Dark, Monarch Spa opening
- Questions about Scout Coffee (maybe not until Summer 2023) and Engle & Associates (when?)

RESTROOMS

- Impact on those who have public restrooms – increased water costs, extra cleaning supplies, staff time for cleaning
- No infrastructure to connect to it
- Quantify the cost of no restrooms.
- Link to homelessness issue (if installed – how to prevent sleeping in them – messy)

TREES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Need banners/signage (cute/funky)
- Lighting in trees needs upkeep and repair
- Uneven sidewalks need grinders – trip hazard
- Trees trimmed or pulled and thinned. City manages 3000 street trees. Each tree is \$1-2000. Could there be a program created for business owners?
- Birds - sidewalk cleaning, public health issue. Can't discharge loud noises because of estuary.

DISTRICT IDENTITY

- What do we want downtown to be?
- Parklets, public gathering place is missing in the downtown. City Park referred to as "needle alley"

DOWNTOWN 6.7.23 AT PIZZA PORT

RESTROOMS

- Impact on those who have public restrooms – increased water costs, extra cleaning supplies, staff time for cleaning
- people leave the district because they can't find a restroom. Moves them out of the area
- Bars/restaurants getting hit the hardest for restrooms

TREES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Lighting in trees still needs upkeep and repair
- Nicely lit trees creates placemaking to keep people in town

DISTRICT IDENTITY

- "Empty stuff doesn't help businesses thrive" – lots of vacant buildings – looks run-down, unappealing to tourists
- Locals not tourists are downtown
- Public opinion is Morro Bay shuts down at 7pm – everything closed, nowhere to eat/shop
- Not enough parking – re-paint spaces and do an assessment of spaces

WORKFORCE HOUSING/STAFF

- Need new development that focus on our workforce
- Hard to find staff
- Homelessness impacts

LISTENING TOUR
REPORT OUT & NEXT STEPS



Take Control - Service Requests

LISTENING TOUR
REPORT OUT & NEXT STEPS



Put a request in!

Give a couple weeks - trees, bird guano, lights, sidewalk disrepair.

The screenshot shows the Morro Bay website (https://www.morrobayca.gov) with a purple header. The header includes a 'STORM INFO' button, two 'PRESS RELEASE' links, and a 'Website Sign In' link. Below the header is a banner for 'CENTRAL COAST CLEAN' with a video player and social media icons. A navigation bar features five icons: a speech bubble (Service Request), a credit card (Pay Utility Bill), a document (Agenda & Minutes), a key (Public Records), and a bicycle (Recreational Activities). A yellow arrow points to the 'Service Request' icon. Below the navigation bar are sections for 'Election Information', 'Hot Topics' (with a link to 'New affordable rental housing at 405 Atascadero Rd is now leasing'), 'News Flash', 'Meetings Calendar', and a Facebook widget for 'City of Morro Bay'.

STORM INFO

PRESS RELEASE: March Storm Recovery Update
Read On...

PRESS RELEASE: March Storm - Impending Storm Preparations
Read On...

Create a Website Account - Manage notification subscriptions, save form progress and more.

Website Sign In

straws from ending up in our waters later. Help us keep Morro Bay clean.

CENTRAL COAST CLEAN

Service Request
Help, Questions, Feedback

Pay Utility Bill
Billing and Payment Options

Agenda & Minutes
View Current Documents

Public Records
Documents & Information

Recreational Activities
Stay Active with Morro Bay

Election Information
City Council Agendas
City Manager's Updates
City Goals & Objectives

Hot Topics
New affordable rental housing at 405 Atascadero Rd is now leasing
Rockview at Sunset, the new affordable rental housing under construction at 405 Atascadero Road is now accepting applications. Preference is given to applicants living or working in Morro Bay.

News Flash
Meetings Calendar

City of Morro Bay
14,999 followers

Follow Page
Share

4th of July 2019

https://www.morrobayca.gov/911/Service-Request

Results



- Helped guide Chamber programming
- Shared resources and tools with business owners
- Brought problems to light that were not seen prior
- Helped guide City improvement projects

Squeaky Wheel Roundtable

Help chart the course



You are invited to engage in round-robin table discussions on issues of importance to the business community.

You will also get a chance to rate priorities for Chamber advocacy

Register at morrochamber.org/events



February 8, 2023, 5:30-7:30 pm
Inn at Morro Bay, Morro Bay Room
60 State Park Rd



Squeaky Wheel

- **Round Robin table discussions**
- **City Department Heads**
 - **Public Works**
 - **Community Development**
 - **City Administration**
 - **Police**
 - **Fire**
 - **Harbor**
- **Voting exercise to rate priorities for Chamber advocacy during City Council goal setting**



Questions?

lynsey@morrochamber.org



Western Association
of Chamber Executives

Atascadero Chamber of Commerce



- Julie Matthews, VP of Membership
- julie@atascaderochamber.org
- City Population: 30,000
- 800 Members



Atascadero
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

small CHAMBERS. BIG OPPORTUNITIES.

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**THREE PROGRAMS
THAT HAVE A RIPPLE
EFFECT CAUSING
IMPACT!**



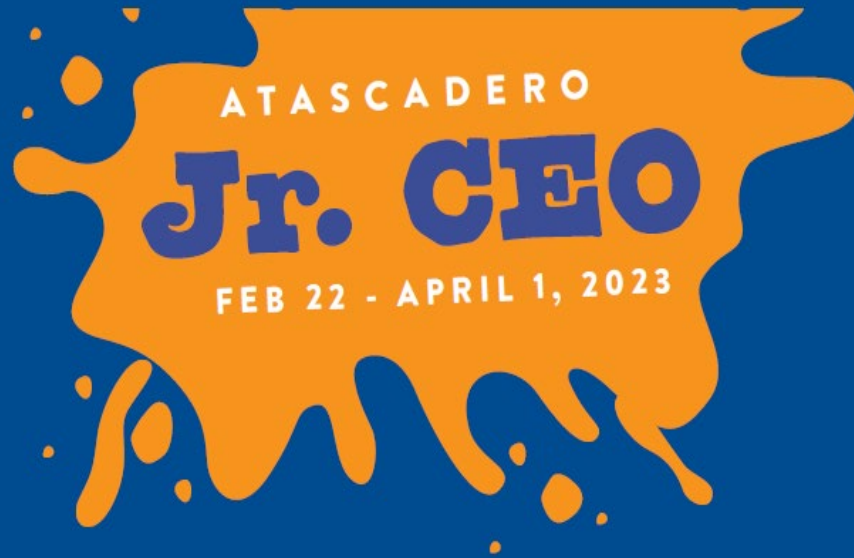
Jr. CEO
ATASCADERO

ENROLL NOW!

LEARN
HOW TO
START AND
RUN A
BUSINESS

Educating Tomorrow's Future Entrepreneurs

ATASCADERO JR. CEO PROGRAM

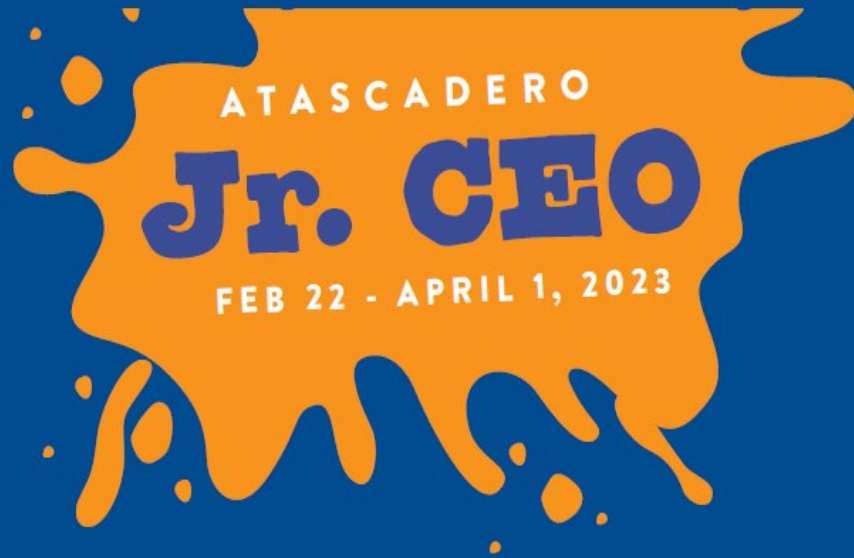


Jr. CEO Program

- Ages 6-16+
- 6-week virtual program
 - Business fundamentals
 - Cost models
 - Safety
 - Food preparation
 - Marketing
 - Banking Basics

**Program developed by the
Visalia Chamber of Commerce*

ATASCADERO JR. CEO PROGRAM



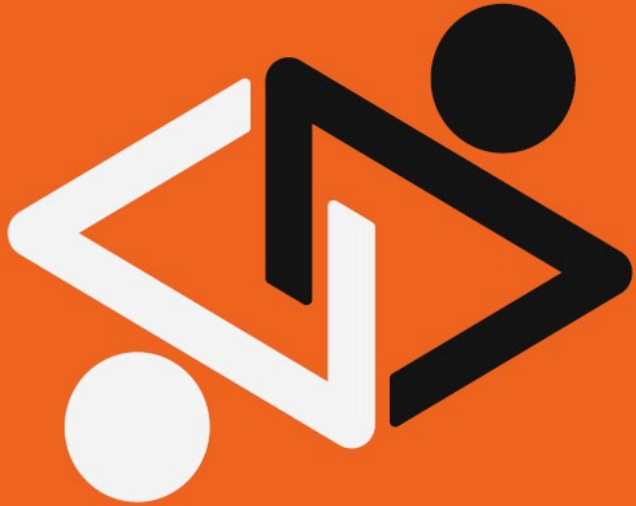
Jr. CEO Program

- CEO's must visit City Hall for a business license.
- At the end of the course, students sell their goods and services at "Jr. CEO Business Day."
- This creates a real-life experience for kids to make money.
- Sponsors love this program.



Jr. CEO Program

- **Community leaders** taught classes and **participated** in "Business Day."
- **Empowered students** to be public speakers at the Annual Awards Dinner and Gala.
- The **Chamber** became a **Champion** for community
- The **Chamber** organization **created value** with this program.



GET YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

Your Website is your Strongest Marketing Tool

Grant funding provided us the opportunity to fill a marketing gap in our business community.

Identify the Problem.
Fill the Need.

"Chambers are in the SOLUTIONS business"
Dave Kilby

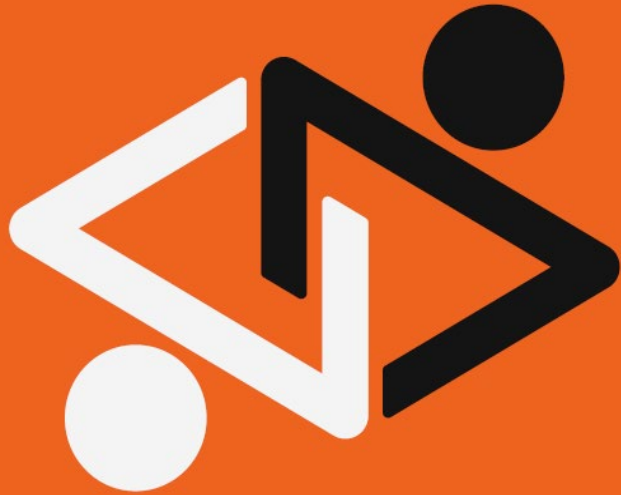


GET YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

Your Website is your Strongest Marketing Tool

Benefits:

- Employed a "Get Your Business Online" program manager.
- Assisted over 85 businesses in the past year with online presence and digital literacy.
- Helped serve the Hispanic business community with understanding and trust of our services.
- The Chamber organization created value.



GET YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

Keep it Simple

Website:

- About
- Services
- Menu/Products
- Contact
- Hours of Operation

Scope:

- 8 hours of design services
- 2 hours of meetings
- 2 hours of digital literacy
- *Services not available for nonprofits*

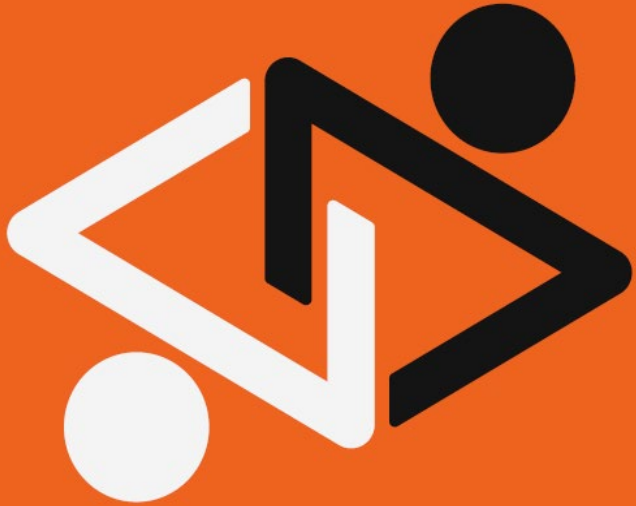


GET YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

Keep it Simple

Client Responsibilities:

- Attend website maintenance meeting(s)
- Purchase domain
- Purchase hosting
- Attend digital literacy training



GET YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

How To . . .

Steps to Implement Program

1. Seek Grant Funding – program is ripe for grants!
2. Be inclusive and competitive. Allow this program to serve surrounding communities.
3. Hire a program manager
4. Develop registration materials
5. Market services
6. Launch!



Workforce Development

Benefits

- Employed a “Workforce Development” program manager.
- A constant resource with grant funding and hiring support.
- Solutions for businesses in our region.



Atascadero
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



How To . . .

Implement this program with 3 Steps:

1. Build relationships with the Workforce Development Board
2. Use SLO County model to identify funding using Workforce Foundation Opportunity Act (WIOA)
3. Deploy Program

Questions?

julie@atascaderochamber.org



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San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce



Jim Dantona

President & CEO

- San Luis Obispo, CA
- Population – 50,000
- 1,200 Members



small CHAMBERS. BIG OPPORTUNITIES.

Family Friendly Workplace



**San Luis Obispo County
Family-Friendly Workplaces**

- Limited childcare resources
- Partnership between First 5 SLO County – County of SLO - Chamber
- Free consultation
- Awards

www.slofamilyfriendlywork.org

S.O.A.R.



SOAR

SLO ONBOARDING ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

www.slochamber.org/soar

- Talent from out of the area
- Difficulty finding a connection
- Dedicated “concierge”
- Better employee retention
- New talent resource

Cracking the Government Code



- Build a pipeline of engaged business leaders
- Barriers to entry
- Nuts & bolts of government
- Panels: Government staff, elected officials and advocates

Questions?

jim@slochamber.org



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