

PRESS RELEASE

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Economic Vitality Corporation Staffing Updates

Growing the EVC Team to Help Grow SLO County's Economy

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIF. – (September 1, 2020) – The Economic Vitality Corporation continues its work in San Luis Obispo County with the announcement staff updates. We are pleased to welcome Maria Kelly, Interim Executive Director, and Jill LeMieux, Director of Business Strategy. After sixteen years, Mike Manchak has left the organization to begin a new chapter in his professional career. We at the EVC are grateful for his years of dedication and service.

Maria Kelly has served as an EVC board member since 2014 and is looking forward to serving the EVC as the Interim Executive Director. While the EVC will work towards a formal recruitment process, the Executive Committee determined that it was essential to have immediate support to guide the team through the end of 2020. For the past 15 years, Maria's career path includes leadership roles in business and government while serving local communities. Maria is a strong proponent of improving communications among stakeholders and working to highlight industry and community benefits of a healthy economy. Her work with nonprofits, small and large businesses, has led to her deep appreciation for the contributions they all make to ensure a thriving SLO County community. "Based on the recent survey results from the EVC stakeholders and the work ahead, Maria is a great fit for us at this time," said Jolie Ditmore.

Jill LeMieux brings a wealth of professional nonprofit service to the EVC. After seven years with the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce, Jill joined the EVC team in June of 2020 to work on special projects, including outreach and support to local manufacturers through a grant from California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTc). Her work will directly benefit our manufacturing community through resources and technical assistance in response to COVID-19. Jill and her community and business connections are a tremendous asset to our organization. Her passion for the EVC and our mission to support business and economic growth will help us expand our ability to serve local businesses.

Michael Manchak announced his departure from the regional non-profit organization as of June 30. Manchak served the EVC since 2005, leading the organization to create economic balance and job opportunities throughout San Luis Obispo County. His years of service include overseeing the development of several business resources: a regional Economic Strategy with industry clusters, an Economic Dashboard for economic indicators, the Central Coast Capital Network to grow companies, the Employer-Talent Connection website for a stronger workforce, and a tri-county Broadband Consortium for faster internet connectivity. Under his leadership, the EVC advocated for infrastructure improvements within workforce housing, airport expansion, and conducted economic studies to help local industries such as airport, wine, tourism, and broadband.

Over the next few months, the EVC Board of Directors encourages the community to track our progress via our webpage and newsletters with updates on:

- **EVC's Economic Development Catalyst Projects:** In July, the EVC launched an effort to study the economic impacts of COVID19 on the local economy and formulate catalyst projects and actions to help grow and diversify the region's industry. The analysis will guide the EVC's work short term and long term and include a deep dive into addressing challenges and pursuing opportunities within the County's sub-regions through projects for a COVID and post COVID environment.
- **Broadband Internet:** Our rural County is significantly challenged in providing the critical infrastructure needed to serve our residents and the growing needs of the business community. To improve our local conditions and internet speeds, the EVC is working with our partners at the Pacific Coast Broadband Consortium to host a Regional Broadband Summit to catalyze change, bring partners together and elevate the discussion to bring investment to San Luis Obispo County's fiber network.
- **EVC Childcare Initiative:** High costs and long waitlists for childcare has challenged families and employers for many years in our County. Childcare is an essential service for our economic success. To create solutions to this long-term challenge that is holding back our economy, the EVC is working with First 5 California to create solutions. Thanks to grant from our partners at Bank of America and Wells Fargo Bank to start this project!
- **EVC Employer-Talent Connection Website:** In May the EVC launched the EVC Employer-Talent Connection website, a valuable resource that comes at the right time to address the long-term challenge of helping businesses and government to connect talent to jobs. Since the website's launch, we have connected with over 50 businesses in need of EVC support or resources to help grow or sustain their organization. Visit www.SloCountyWorks.com and get connected!

"It is an exciting time for us here at the EVC, and fortunately, we have been able to adapt in the COVID environment and are excited to see the team grow to meet the demands of our community," said Loreli Cappel, Senior Project Director. "We are working virtually, as are many of our community members and we continue to be available to serve!"

ABOUT US -- Established in 1994, the Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) serves all of San Luis Obispo County as a nonprofit economic development organization. We are committed to stimulating the region's economic vitality by creating jobs, fostering investment, and promoting business. (805) 788-2012 www.sloevc.org