



"To develop as a leader, you need to leave your comfort zone. That's how personal growth occurs"

-Mehmood Khan, the former chief scientific officer of global research and development at PepsiCo and now the CEO of Life Biosciences

Teamwork Matters

A message from
the City Manager

Jason Stilwell



There are good things happening in Santa Maria, and proof that businesses, residents, and employees have confidence that better days are ahead. We can take some time to recognize and celebrate positive community indicators. Mayor Patino and I shared some of these stories and metrics during the October virtual 2020 State of the City presentation.

Santa Maria remains safe. Violent crime dropped 22 percent during the first nine months of this year compared to the same span in 2019. Reports of stolen vehicles doubled. Overall, people are staying home more and going out less.

Our unemployment rate is down to 7.8 percent as of August, according to the Employment Development Department. We enjoyed a record low of 3.8 percent in September 2019 then suffered a record 16.9 percent in April. We are acutely aware of the concerns and economic fragility of many local businesses - one reason why the City is partnering with the Santa Barbara Foundation to provide grants of up to \$7,500 each to qualifying local small businesses.

Santa Maria's housing market appears strong. We are seeing continued price appreciation. A year ago, the median home selling price was \$397,500. Now it is nearly nine percent higher at \$430,000. The number of listings are down, and homes are staying on the market for a shorter amount of time.

Building activity remains strong. The new Toyota, Honda, and Central Coast Truck Center dealerships are taking shape. A couple of mini-storage projects were built, a new dialysis center is being built at Donovan at Broadway, the Sierra Madre Cottages are done and occupied, and the Azure apartments are partly occupied and will be complete next year.

Golden Corral is under construction in the Crossroads Center. There also is a new Mountain Mike's Pizza being built at Crossroads center near Krispy Kreme. Dutch Brothers, a coffee shop, is being built along North Broadway and Shaw's Restaurant is poised to reopen.

Take a moment to think about this. Even restaurants still have a measure of confidence that they can open up, in the middle of the pandemic.

Allan Hancock College broke ground on its new Fine Arts Complex on September 30th at the Santa Maria campus. This two-story, \$48 million facility will provide 88,000 square feet of room, including a 400-seat concert and recital venue. It will house the college's dance, drama, film, graphics, music, photography, and multimedia arts and communications programs. Construction is expected to be completed by fall of 2022.

City departments continue the process of safely reopening, and preparing to do so. More branch libraries are initiating Grab and Go service. The City Attorney's Office, Fire Department, and Community Development are among those scheduled to reopen their counters in the next few weeks.

We need to celebrate the wins, and to stay focused on vigilance and on practicing resilience. Please continue to be mindful of ways to avoid spreading COVID-19 among our co-workers. Thank you for the results to-date.

Jason