

CATALYST. CONVENER. CHAMPION.

ANNUAL REPORT



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



As we reflect on our work from 2020, we see a year in which the Chamber was able to focus on our essential “mission-based” work like never before. With the absence of major events and the streamlining of our meetings, forums and webinars, more time was made available for our most critical work; advocating for our business community. The vast majority of our time and resources were focused on the key functions of **Convening Leaders and Influencers**, serving as a **Champion for a Strong Community** and being a **Catalyst for Business Growth**.

While the business community needed a strong Chamber more than ever, our work would not have been possible without the ongoing support of Oceanside’s businesses. The business community placed their trust in us when we most needed their support. The extent to which the business community supported us in the past year was beyond anything we could have asked for under such circumstances. This support allowed us to continue to serve and provide a strong voice for our businesses when they truly needed someone to speak for them.

Additionally, our business owners and corporate leaders stood by each other and showed a true commitment to preserving the strong quality of life we have enjoyed in Oceanside for so many years.

I also want to acknowledge the incredible partnerships we have had with other chambers and business organizations in North County and beyond. It was great to see everyone come together in the spirit of collaboration to serve our respective business communities much more effectively together than any of us could have done on our own.

Finally, the leadership of the Oceanside City Council and City Staff was evident throughout the year, as they made tremendous efforts to help our businesses navigate the health crisis and mandated closures.

As we work toward economic recovery in the coming year, continuing and building upon partnerships within our City and neighboring communities will remain critical. I am confident that we will work through this together and emerge stronger in the long run.

Scott M. Ashton

OUR MISSION:

The Oceanside Chamber of Commerce stimulates economic prosperity and fosters a vibrant community.

The Chamber would like to thank the following Chamber Partners for their generous financial contributions to the Chamber’s program of work.

Emerald Partner



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Advancing Oceanside by ...

CONVENING LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS

The Oceanside Chamber works tirelessly to develop and maintain strong relationships through the various sectors of our community. This includes our small business owners, corporate leaders, the non-profit community, government employees and elected leaders. Through these relationships, we are uniquely positioned to bring people together to work on our City's most important issues. Here's a quick overview of some of our work in the area of *Convening Leaders and Influencers* during the past year...

Photo taken 2019 Oceanside Heroes Event

A STRONG & CONSISTENT VOICE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

SAVE SMALL BUSINESS COALITION



PROVIDING ACCESS TO COMMUNITY LEADERS

ANNUAL MEET THE CITY

Before large “in-person” events became a distant memory, the Chamber’s **Annual Meet the City Reception** produced one of its largest audiences ever. The purpose of the event is to provide our business leaders with face to face access to our City staff and elected leaders and to allow our smaller businesses the ability to make new connections with our corporate leaders.

EMERGING ISSUES FORUM

The interruption of in-person events brought on the acceleration of our use of technology. The transition of our **Emerging Issues Forum** from our conference room to cyberspace was actually a blessing in disguise making it easier for the Chamber to bring our elected officials into the same “room” as our business leaders on multiple occasions throughout the year. This allowed our members to access real-time COVID-19 updates with our Congressman, State Senator and Assemblymember, County Supervisor and Oceanside Mayor.

“During times of crisis like our businesses have faced in the past year, business owners need timely information and answers to important questions. The Chamber came through with strong access to elected officials through its Emerging Issues Forum. As a Chamber member, I was impressed that I could attend and participate in a videoconference that included our Congressman, State Assemblymember, County Supervisor and Mayor. Membership offers access I could not have found elsewhere.”

***Joanna Hunter, President/Owner,
True West Facility Supply|Oceanside***

Through its partnership with **The Save Small Business Coalition**, the Chamber continued advocacy efforts for a “Phase 4” COVID-19 relief bill that would include:

- **Paycheck Protection Program Extension and Enhancement** including simplified good faith certification for forgiveness of loans under \$150,000 and authorization of a second round of loans for small businesses experiencing revenue reductions of 35% or more.
- **Workforce Development** funding of \$1.3 billion to provide job seekers access to employment, education, training, and support services through a combination of new and existing programs.
- **Business Liability Protection** from COVID-19 related exposure for those employers who follow applicable federal, state, or local government guidelines for the protection of their employees and/or customers and protection from liability claims arising from COVID-19 medical care for healthcare workers and facilities.
- **State and Local Aid** for one-time COVID-related expenses and revenue shortfalls based on a fixed share of actual costs and revenue shortfalls within an overall funding cap.

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF SMALL BUSINESSES

The Chamber supported City and County efforts to get local businesses back up and running safely and participated with neighboring Chambers, businesses and community leaders in the **Re-Opening Rally** to encourage fair treatment of Small Businesses. Chamber staff wrote letters and gave testimony at several County Board meetings to ensure the voice of business was represented.

“I am proud to be a part of the Oceanside Chamber! When the restaurant industry needed a strong voice to push back against unfair closure mandates, the Chamber came through for us and made sure our voices were heard.”

***Kristin Cates, Owner,
Rookies Restaurant & Sports Bar***

REGIONAL PRO-BUSINESS COALITIONS

Numerous Chambers and business organizations throughout San Diego County shared the common goal of fair treatment for our small businesses. On many occasions we banded together to provide a cohesive voice for our respective business communities. A highlight included the Oceanside Chamber’s efforts to organize a coalition of **20 San Diego County Business Organizations** to push back against San Diego County Health officials’ decision to add additional re-opening requirements on our local businesses.



STATE LEGISLATION

Unfortunately, COVID-19 didn’t stop our state legislators and Governor from pursuing laws that would make doing business in California even more challenging. One of the most glaring examples of this was the passage of SB1383 which significantly burdens businesses by requiring small employers with only five employees to provide eligible employees with 12 weeks of mandatory family leave. While we diligently fought against this bill, it unfortunately passed.

YOUR VOICE ON CITY ISSUES

To be the voice for our businesses on City issues remained a key priority. As an example, Chamber leaders participated in the City of Oceanside’s focus groups related to the **General Plan Update** to ensure that the business community has a voice in the process. We supported several successful mixed-used projects that will bring much needed housing to the downtown area. Additionally, Chamber staff assisted with outreach to restaurants regarding the **City’s Zero Waste Plan Business Sustainability Workshop** to ensure that they will have the opportunity to give input on impacts to their businesses.



A PLATFORM FOR BUSINESSES TO SPEAK

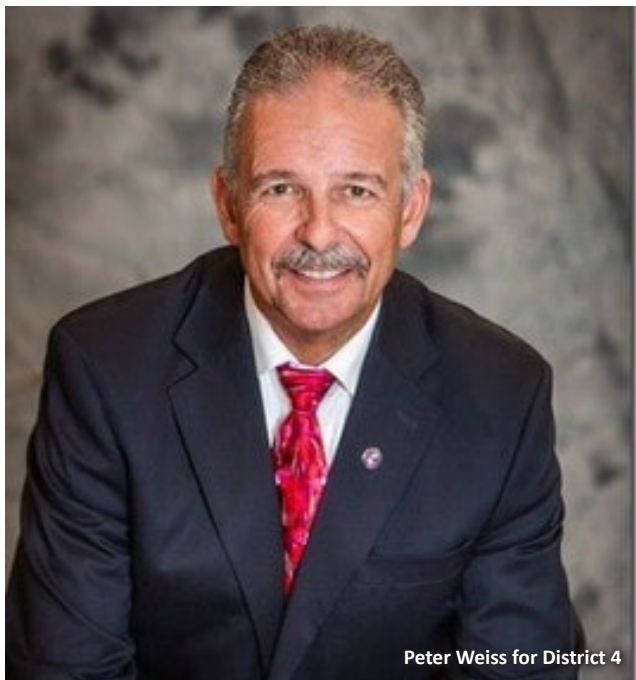
DIGITAL ADVOCACY THROUGH ONECLICKPOLITICS

The Oceanside Chamber partnered with the Carlsbad and Vista Chambers to take business advocacy work to the next level by purchasing subscriptions to **OneClick Advocacy**. The platform includes innovative communication tools such as photo and video messaging, integrated text messaging, and direct social media posts to legislators’ profiles to provide several avenues for business owners to connect with elected officials on important issues.

HELPING ELECT BUSINESS FRIENDLY CANDIDATES

ENDORSEMENT VICTORIES FOR OCEANSIDE CITY COUNCIL

In August the Oceanside Chamber announced its endorsements for the 2020 City of Oceanside Elections. The Chamber Board of Directors voted to support **Ryan Keim** for District 3 and **Peter Weiss** for District 4. Both candidates won their respective district races.

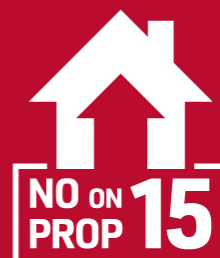


“Now more than ever, we need City leadership that understands the importance of supporting our business community. The Chamber has displayed its support for businesses by endorsing and helping elect Council members **Ryan Keim and **Peter Weiss**. We now have a strong foundation for rebuilding our business community and emerging from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.”**

Neil Nagata, Nagata Bros Farms

2020 BALLOT MEASURES

NO ON THE PROPERTY TAX HIKE



THE DEFEAT OF PROP 15

The Chamber made recommendations on several key ballot measures in the November 2020 Elections and participated in some successful coalitions including the defeat of **Proposition 15** that would have ushered in the largest property tax increase in state history and the passage of **Proposition 22** that protected app-based drivers and rideshare services

2020 CANDIDATE FORUMS

The Oceanside Chamber, in partnership with the Carlsbad and Vista Chambers held two candidate forums to provide voters with critical information. These forums included the **49th Congressional District** and the **Tri-City Healthcare District**.



Advancing Oceanside by serving as a ...
CHAMPION FOR A STRONGER COMMUNITY

The Oceanside Chamber takes great pride in playing a role in promoting our City as a great place to live, work and play. We take seriously the role of contributing to the incredible quality of life our businesses and residents enjoy in Oceanside. In 2020, the Chamber launched its “Advancing Oceanside” brand to better reflect the work that the Chamber, the Oceanside Chamber Foundation and the Chamber’s Political Action Committee do in moving our community forward. Here’s a quick overview of some of our work in the area of a **Champion for a Stronger Community** during the past year...



NORTH COUNTY CARES PROGRAM

North County Cares, a program designed by the Oceanside and Vista Chambers of Commerce along with the San Diego North Economic Development Council, brought much needed relief to our community. The program supported both families in need and locally owned restaurants who have borne the brunt of the impacts of mandatory closures and social distancing orders. Over \$60,000 in donations (with Genentech being the primary funder) was raised for purchasing gift cards at participating Oceanside and Vista Chamber member restaurants. The gift cards were distributed to the Oceanside and Vista Unified School Districts to provide meals for families in need in our community.

“Many of our local families have been seriously impacted financially by the events of 2020. When food insecurity became a growing issue, the Chamber came through with its North County Cares Program. This program provided tangible help to our local families by giving nearly \$40,000 in restaurant gift cards that we distributed to more than 1700 Oceanside families.”

***Deb Wickman, Oceanside Unified School District,
Family Engagement,
Teacher on Special Assignment***

“I want to say thank you to the donors and the Chamber for coming through for small business at a critical time. This has been a big help to us. Thank you!”

Josh Arbenz, Stratford at the Harbor



ADVANCING OCEANSIDE PODCAST

In 2020, we launched our **Advancing Oceanside Podcast** to provide a platform for our local non-profits and small businesses to share their message to our community. We started the show with interviews from several community and non-profit leaders and plan to expand into other areas in the coming year.

AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF LOCAL NON-PROFITS

The Chamber worked with several non-profit organizations during the pandemic. We saw non-profits struggling to replenish their resources due to hardships caused by the pandemic and dedicated a portion of our weekly newsletters to promoting the various needs of these organizations.

- The Chamber partnered with the **The North County Food Bank** to hold a **Virtual Food Drive**. The Drive, which ran until the end of June, gave community members the virtual opportunity to purchase food items and make donations. In October, the Chamber partnered with the North County Food Bank again to host the annual **Scare Away Hunger Peanut Butter Drive**. Both virtual drives were promoted on our digital platforms and through email communications.
- The **Veterans Association of North County (VANC)** held reoccurring food drives and asked for jars of peanut butter, all of which were promoted in the our email communications and on social media.
- The Chamber partnered with **Solutions for Change** to host a **Bedding Drive**. The Bedding Drive asked for new to slightly used bedding supplies as Solutions saw an influx of families entering their program.
- The Chamber supported **Tri-City Medical Center Foundation's Annual Wigs for Hope Fundraiser**, an event that raises money to make custom wigs for women undergoing chemotherapy. With the support of the community, Tri-City Medical Center surpassed their fundraising goal.





The **1st Annual Heroes of Oceanside and Camp Pendleton Event** was held virtually in August. This event combined the previous **Enlisted Recognition Reception** and **Oceanside Heroes Reception** into a larger celebration of community heroes. We were pleased to recognize representatives from the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Oceanside Police Department, Oceanside Fire Department, Healthcare Workers and teachers and staff from the Oceanside Unified School District for their outstanding contributions to the overall well-being and advancement of our City.



The Best of Oceanside Quarterly Journal

The publication highlighted some of Oceanside's best with our Stories of Unity and Resilience, Future Talent, Game Changers and Healthcare Heroes. The publication was primarily distributed by direct mail to residents and businesses.



The **Annual North County Health Fair** was one of the few in-person events the Chamber was able to hold in 2020. The event provided a much-needed opportunity for healthcare providers to connect with community members.



Advancing Oceanside by serving as a ...
CATALYST FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

The Oceanside Chamber believes that “pro-business” is “pro-community”. Our small businesses play a key role in the character of Oceanside and the tremendous quality of life we enjoy every day. The pandemic brought about new challenges in how the Chamber would approach its role as a **Catalyst for Business Growth...**

Mural located at Security Public Storage Oceanside

ACCESS TO TIMELY INFORMATION

- **Development of a COVID-19 Website**

Within just a few days of the lockdowns, our COVID-19 website was up and running with multiple informational updates daily. We soon added Shop Local and Restaurant Guides to help our small businesses connect with community members that wanted to support them.

- **Conduit for Communication**

The Chamber facilitated “two-way” communication between government and businesses, most notably at the county level as Supervisors sought the input of businesses on safe reopening plans. At the City level, Chamber staff represented the business community on the City’s Economic Recovery Task Force.

- **Creation of a COVID-19 Enewsletter**

Chamber staff members spent numerous hours attending meetings and sifting through resources to determine what information was most important to share with our businesses. We launched a weekly “COVID-19 specific” email to make sure our subscribers had access to the most timely information on emergency loan programs, small business grants, relief legislation reopening guidelines, childcare resources and more.

- **Informational Webinars**

It quickly became clear that “business as usual” would not work in 2020. Through a wide variety of partners the Chamber launched a series of free informational webinars on topics including telework videoconferencing for business, launching e-commerce, marketing, creating sales videos, non-profit fundraising, the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), PPP loan forgiveness, emergency action plans and more.

- **Serving our Restaurant Community**

As restaurants were among some of the hardest hit industries, Chamber staff made it a point to stay in close contact with restaurant owners and managers to keep them informed of the latest information and opportunities related to the food service industry.



“When we were struggling to get assistance on our PPP Loan application with one of the large financial institutions, the Chamber came through by connecting us with Frontwave Credit Union. Frontwave took great care of us and treated us like we mattered to them. Their assistance with the PPP loan helped us weather the COVID storm.”

Zell Dwelley, Owner, Beach Break Cafe



- **Small Business Loan Sources**

Oceanside-based Frontwave Credit Union stepped up to serve our businesses by becoming an SBA Lender and offering PPP Loans to small businesses. The Chamber helped connect small businesses to this program and many were able to receive these critical loans.

MASSIVE CAMPAIGN OUTREACH

The Oceanside Chamber mobilized its staff to conduct a massive outreach campaign to the Oceanside business community at the beginning of the mandatory lockdowns and closures of our small businesses. Hundreds of businesses, both Chamber members and non-members, were contacted so we could learn what their needs were and how we could best serve them in the coming weeks and months. The feedback we received helped direct our efforts throughout the balance of 2020, allowing us to effectively serve our business community in a time of great crisis.



WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

After the initial stay-at-home order was announced back in March, the Chamber immediately collected a list of all the restaurants and retail shops open and offering their services. This included important details such as delivery services (Grubhub, Uber Eats, Postmates), pickup locations, menus, hours and more. When restaurants received approval to offer outdoor dining, the Chamber put together a list of restaurants with patio seating available. As the future remains unknown, the Chamber continuously looks for new ways to offer support and promotion for local small businesses using our digital platforms to share information.



VIRTUAL NETWORKING EVENTS

• Oceanside Chamber Events

While making business connections remained a top priority for many Chamber members during the pandemic, the Chamber shifted to virtual networking events on Zoom. Our monthly **First Tuesday Coffee** went virtual and attendance remained strong. As a result, the Chamber is looking to hold the event in a hybrid, in-person/online, style moving forward.

• Partnership Events

The Chamber partnered with other Chambers in North County to host joint Zoom networking events. The Chamber first partnered with the Escondido and Vista Chambers to host the **North County Chambers Virtual Mixer** and later partnered with the Carlsbad Chamber to host a **Virtual Speed Networking Event**. Both events had a variety of attendees with ample time for small group networking. In January, the Chamber's Young Professionals Network will host a Virtual Beer Tasting experience in partnership with the Vista Chamber.

“When the COVID-19 crisis hit, our need to connect with other businesses still remained. The Chamber came through by quickly creating meaningful and interactive virtual networking events. We were impressed with their ability to partner with neighboring Chambers to help us expand our network and reach a greater audience.”

**Christopher Weiner, Print Master,
AlphaGraphics – Oceanside**



SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Through its partnership with the City of Oceanside, the Chamber played a large role in the distribution of CARES Act funding to our small business community through two programs...

- **Small Business Grants**

The Chamber administered the “city-wide” portion of the Small Business Grant Program, while partnering with MainStreet Oceanside who handled grant distribution in the downtown district. Chamber staff oversaw program promotion and outreach and the review of grant applications and distribution of the grant awards. In total, 77 businesses received over \$155,000 in grant funding. Top industries were food and beverage, salons and personal services, entertainment, and healthcare. Chamber CEO, Scott Ashton noted that more than half of the grant recipients reported a decline in revenue greater than 50% from the previous year.

- **Shop Local**

Shop Local Oceanside is an ongoing effort to revitalize Oceanside’s economy through various avenues and to create overall awareness for residents and tourists to support local businesses. The Chamber managed the marketing and outreach to participating businesses and consumers. The Chamber purchased \$8,500 in gift cards from small businesses and distributed the gift cards to local residents who participated in Shop Local social media contests.

“Many small businesses like ours experienced a significant financial downturn in 2020. The Chamber came through for us with a small business grant. We appreciate their proactive response to make sure we were aware of the opportunity.”

***Dan and Kim Roy, Owner,
Fully Promoted of Oceanside***

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber’s Workforce Development Task Force forged a partnership with the Oceanside Unified School District’s Career Technical Education team to develop plans for video tours of local businesses. The program will be designed to provide OUSD students with exposure to emerging industries in Oceanside and potential career paths to explore. Our team is working toward developing partnerships with the Carlsbad and Vista Chambers and Tri-City Medical Center in order to expand the reach of our programming.

BEST OF OCEANSIDE PUBLICATIONS

The Chamber continued to provide strong avenues for local businesses to connect with prospective customers. The “Best of Oceanside” series of publications includes an Annual Community Guide, Quarterly Journal and City Map, providing businesses with a variety of options for reaching visitors, locals, other businesses and more.

#StrongerTogether



Tri-City Medical Center



Celebrating
60 years of
serving Carlsbad,
Oceanside & Vista.

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