

BUSINESS VOICE

ISSUE 168 | JANUARY 2023

A group of people are celebrating at night, holding and lighting sparklers. The scene is illuminated by warm, golden light from the sparklers and cool blue bokeh lights in the background. The people are smiling and looking at the sparklers. The overall atmosphere is festive and celebratory.

A PUBLICATION OF THE
RIDGECREST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2022-2023 Chamber OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Chris Hill
Board Chair
State Farm Insurance

Kristina Cross
Chair Elect
Grocery Outlet

Daryl Silberberg Jr.
Board Treasurer
IWW Insurance

Bernie Mondragon
Past Chair
Bernie's Landscaping

Debbie Benson
Maturango Museum

Janis Bottorff
S.A.S.S.

Kathryn Bachman
Cerro Coso Community College

Chip Holloway
Desert Empire Fairgrounds

Nancy Pace
Bake My Day

Christian Salviejo
RRH, Bella Sera

Nick Wakley
RAW Media Productions

Rebecca McCourt
Chamber Executive Director

Business Voice is a publication of the
Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce
128 E. California Ave. Ste. B,
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
(760) 375-8331
www.ridgecrestchamber.com
chamber@ridgecrestchamber.com

Issue 168 January 2023

BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE

Chris Hill

Chairman Message – January 2023

2023 – I wonder what it holds for me? That's a question that I'm sure many of us are asking ourselves. This last year certainly brought back some normalcy (yay for in person events!), though also introduced other challenges (the word of the year might as well have been inflation) into already tumultuous times (Covid: Year 3). If these last few years have taught us anything, it's that we're tougher than we ever knew we could be.

They've also shown us the importance of reevaluating, retooling, and restarting when needed. At your Chamber of Commerce, we strive to recognize trends within the business community. We are constantly looking for ways that we can better serve you, our members, and would love to hear your ideas on how we can achieve that. Oscar De La Hoya has said "There is always space for improvement, no matter how long you've been in the business." A lot has changed in 76 years, and we, your local Chamber, must continue to shift and adjust to keep up. Help us help you - Hold us to it!

You'll already see some changes to marketing options like the electronic sign, some tweaks to networking opportunities like our monthly luncheons, and some adjustments to events like the Economic Outlook Conference (remember – Feb 23, 2023 at the Fairgrounds – contact us about sponsoring!). Let us know what you think!

Here's to the start of a beautiful new year! Cheers to the hope of what tomorrow may bring!

-Chris Hill, Chairman

An advertisement for Tj. Frisbee Bicycles. It features a silhouette of a person riding a bicycle on a curved path. The text includes the business name, tagline, and contact details.

Tj. Frisbee
BICYCLES

Serving Toddlers to Champions
Since 1972

Phone: 760-375-4202
217 N. Balsam, Ridgecrest CA 93555

CHAMBER LUNCHEON

RSVP today!



CHAMBER@RIDGECRESTCHAMBER.COM

January 10, 2023— Sean Hancock, Cerro Coso Community College

Join the Ridgecrest Chamber for our monthly luncheon at 12 noon on January 10, 2023 and hear a presentation **at the Historic USO** from Cerro Coso Community College President, Sean Hancock.

Hear an update on the state of the College from the Cerro Coso's President. A new year and updated stats on how the local college impacts our community and what it can mean for you and your business.



Your Chamber
is dedicated to:

Building community

Strengthening the economy

Providing networking
opportunities

Representing the interest of
business to the government

Political action

Inside the
BUSINESS
VOICE

Board Chair's Message 2

Luncheon 3

New Member 4—5

Labor Law Corner 7—8

Renewing Members 10

Chairman's Circle 11

Please RSVP by noon on Friday, January 6, 2023.

Join the Ridgecrest Chamber at the Historic USO Building on Tuesday, January 10 at 12 noon.

Lunch will be provided by Pizza Factory.

\$25 w/RSVP, \$30 for non-members or without an RSVP

JOIN US IN PERSON—Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at the Historic USO.

RSVP Today!



Roger & Lorrie Young
(760) 446-2796

1600 N. Norma, No. 4
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

NEW MEMBER

Southern Inyo Healthcare District is comprised of Southern Inyo Hospital, a critical access hospital, and the Rural Health Clinic at Southern Inyo Hospital. Located in the shadow of Mt. Whitney, home of the famous

Alabama Hills, Southern Inyo Healthcare District is surrounded by the unique and beautiful landscape of Lone Pine, California: a gem of the Eastern Sierras that people around the world travel hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles to visit.

Southern Inyo Healthcare District is founded on the belief that communities of all sizes and in all regions deserve local access to high quality healthcare services. That is why although our organization is relatively small and located in a rural setting, we have been steadily expanding to include more programs to better serve our patients and community. Our inpatient services include an Emergency Room, Acute Care services, and a Skilled Nursing Facility. Our outpatient programs have grown to include not only Rehabilitation and Diagnostic Imaging services, but also our world-class, UC Davis-affiliated Wound Care program; the SIH Regenerative Medicine Program, which includes PRP (platelet-rich plasma) injections; and a MAT (medication-addiction treatment) program for opioid addiction. As we look forward to 2023, we are poised to add new, needed programs, such as expanded heart health services, women's health, and home healthcare services.

We have also worked to improve our objective quality of care. For example: the California *Quality Health Indicators Report compares 8 key quality of care practices amongst the 22 licensed critical access hospitals operating in California. SIHD scored 100% for all measures of quality, and we ranked in the top 5% for CAH's in California (*CA CAH EDTC Measures Per Provider – Q3 2022).

We understand that living in a rural area sometimes means that access to quality healthcare is lacking, and we want to make sure that the people of Inyo and Kern counties, as well as their visitors and travelers, get the best care possible without having to travel long distances. At Southern Inyo Healthcare District, our mission is to pursue healthcare excellence with a compassionate heart. We are here to take care of you!



Contact them at (760) 876-5501 or visit their website: <https://www.sihd.org/>

NEW MEMBER

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Ridgecrest — China Lake

The Holiday Inn Express and Suites Ridgecrest is located within minutes of the Scenic Highway 395. The development of this 64,134 square foot four-story, 103 room hotel with meeting & conference rooms was in the works since 2020. They opened in September 2022. The Ridgecrest Chamber welcomed Holiday Inn as a new member in December 2022 with a well attended Ribbon Cutting.

Locally they promote the exploration of the Coso Petroglyphs with the Maturango Museum. Serving visitors to the area, they are conveniently located two miles from the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station. The Ridgecrest Regional Hospital is across the street. Their website totes the concept of “after a long day, soak up the Mojave Sun and enjoy our outdoor pool” and starting the morning “with the hottest breakfast bar in town”. It continues “no matter if you're travelling to Ridgecrest to attend a conference, unwind on vacation, or enjoy a romantic weekend getaway, we have you covered.”

Reservations can be made by calling 760-608-8080 or visiting <https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/ridgecrest/iykrc/hoteldetail>



Ribbon Cutting, December 15, 2022



VIP Housing



Luncheon



Country Boy Photography



Silver Valley Propane



JT4 LLC



EZ Rentals

FULL SERVICE LAW OFFICE

— LAW OFFICE OF —
DENNIS M. SCHUSTER

123 GRANDE WAY E
760-371-1126 SHUSTERLAWGROUP.COM

LABOR LAW CORNER

Workers' Comp: Ways to Protect Employee's Health Benefits

This article is reprinted from CalChamber (12/02/2022) By Dana Leisinger

We have an employee who has been on workers' compensation leave for a few months. How long do we have to continue to pay for his health insurance?

This issue was decided in 2002, yet the question continues to come up. California Labor Code Section 132a makes it clear that employers may not discriminate against an employee who has filed a workers' compensation claim, and until 2002, discontinuing an employee's health benefits was considered such a form of discrimination under that code section.



Workers' Comp Ruling

In 2002, however, the entire panel of workers' compensation judges decided in the case of *Navarro v. A&A Farming* that the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), the federal body of law that governs health benefit plans, preempted the state law.

The panel also held that when an employee goes out on workers' compensation leave, it is a reduction in hours that triggers continuation coverage requirements of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA).

This means that workers' compensation does not protect an employee's health benefit plan.

Family/Disability Leaves

If your employee qualifies for the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or state leaves such as the California Family Rights Act (CFRA) or pregnancy disability leave (PDL), you can place the employee on family leave running concurrently with workers' compensation leave, and that will protect the employee's benefits for 12 weeks as long as your plan is ERISA qualified.

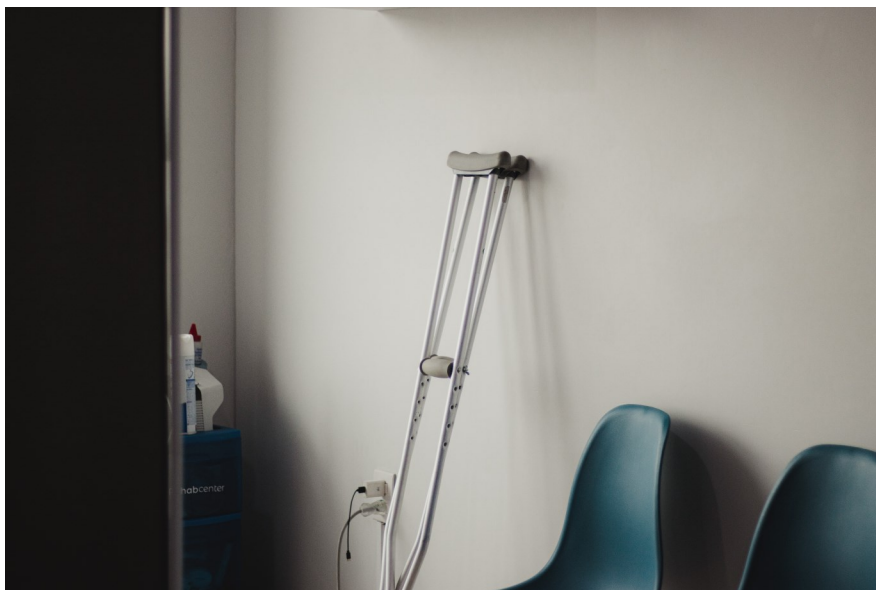
Some employees don't want to be placed on FMLA or CFRA, intending to use those leaves for another reason later in the year. It is the employer, however, who makes the decision and places the qualifying employee on whichever leave is appropriate.

Keep in mind also that if the employee doesn't qualify for family leave, their being out on workers' compensation leave is a reduction in hours triggering COBRA.

If the injured employee does qualify for family leave but requires workers' compensation leave for longer than 12 weeks, then the continuation of benefits under family leave expires and the employer is required to send a timely notice of COBRA rights.

Many employers are under the misconception that if an employee is disabled, health benefits cannot be discontinued. Those benefits, however, are protected only by state and federal family leave and pregnancy disability leave laws.

Column based on questions asked by callers on the Labor Law Helpline, a service to California Chamber of Commerce preferred and executive members. For expert explanations of labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations, not legal counsel for specific situations, call (800) 348-2262 or submit your question at www.hrcalifornia.com.





TTS TAX TIME SERVICES

DECEMBER EDITION

Big Announcement!

Tax Time Services and FBM have combined forces!

Jane and Leo are very excited for this new chapter and want to thank all of our clients for their continuous support!

It's a little early for a New Year's Eve toast, but here's what we are wishing for you: plenty of rest + relaxation this holiday season, new opportunities in 2023, less stress around your taxes and finances and **LOTS** more success coming your way in 2023!

Wishing you a very Happy Holidays! 🍷

Happy Holidays



Year end doesn't have to be so stressful

Visit our **WEBSITE** and sign up for a free discovery call!



TAX TIME SERVICES
1 800 - 229 - 5102
www.taxtimeservices.com
Instagram: @taxtimeservices
Facebook: www.facebook.com/taxtimesvc/



SINCE 1946

Building Community + Strengthening the Economy

Reduce the Risk of Consumer Fraud!



SECURE volume shredding
for a reasonable price.

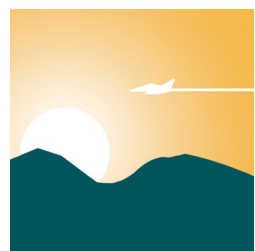
Free Pick-up of 40+ pounds.

(760) 375-9787

Home Office SOLUTIONS

Create a workspace
that works for you.





do business with

MEMBERS

RENEWING MEMBERS in November 2022

Elks Lodge, Ridgecrest #1913

Omni Family Health

Guaranteed Rate

RAD Custom Graphics

Guild Mortgage

Rotary Club of China Lake

IWV Internet Service Provider

Tax Time Services Inc.

JCJ Chavez Construction Inc

Tip Top Arborists Inc.

College Community Services/Hope Center

Deanna Lukens Infant and Family Services

Desert Valleys Federal Credit Union

Thank You

2023

**INDIAN WELLS VALLEY
ECONOMIC
OUTLOOK CONFERENCE**

23 FEBRUARY 2023

BECOME A SPONSOR

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT THE CHAMBER
OFFICE**

**BIRTHDAY!
ANNIVERSARY!
ANY SPECIAL OCCASION!**

**SHOW THEM YOU
CARE ON THEIR
SPECIAL DAY**

 **RIDGECREST
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**



CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE MEMBERS



PLATINUM & GOLD MEMBERS

RIDGECREST REGIONAL
HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

SIENNA PODIATRY - DR. HOLLY
SPOHN GROSS, DPM.

TEYA DEVELOPMENT, LLC

Bowman Asphalt, Inc.

Burkey, Cox, Evans & Bradford

Cerro Coso Community College

Desert Empire Fairgrounds

Guaranteed Rate

Holiday Inn Express

IWV Water District

JT4, LLC

Liberty Ambulance

MWR (Morale Welfare & Rec.)

Oliver Law

Opportunities For Learning

PG&E

RBD California Restaurants / KFC

Saalex Solutions

Sabre Systems, Inc.

Sierra Sands Unified School District

Southern California Edison

Southern Inyo Healthcare District

T-Mobile

Toyota of Ridgecrest