

BUSINESS VOICE

ISSUE 180 | JANUARY 2024

A PUBLICATION OF THE
RIDGECREST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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Business Voice is a publication of the
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Issue 180 January 2024

Kristina Cross

January 2024

Ah, the promise of a new year! As we step into the uncharted territory of 2024, I can't help but wonder about the opportunities and challenges that await us. The past year, with its blend of familiar routines and unforeseen hurdles (looking at you Hurricane Hilary), showcased our resilience amidst evolving circumstances. We've weathered the storms of uncertainty and emerged stronger, with a tenacity we might not have known we possessed.



This turbulent year has underscored the importance of adaptability and renewal. At the Chamber of Commerce, we strive to remain dynamic, attuned to the evolving needs of our business community. Your feedback and ideas are invaluable in this quest for improvement. With 77 years of history, we acknowledge the necessity of continuous adaptation. Help us serve you better!

You'll notice some new offerings, including a series of HR courses, as well as changes to the community calendar. Remember, the Economic Outlook Conference is on February 22, 2024, at the Kerr McGee Center. We invite every one of you to attend. Want to be further involved? Reach out to us about sponsorship opportunities!

In this new year, as you recognize the Chamber's valuable resources for your business and leadership development, bring others to partake with you. Get involved in our various committees and programs; reach out to the Chamber Office. Invite friends and local businesses to join the Chamber; together, we thrive and grow stronger.

Let's raise our glasses to the dawn of this beautiful new year, brimming with hope and possibilities! Happy 2024!

- Kristina

A promotional graphic for Cerro Coso Community College. It features a group of four students (three women and one man) smiling and wearing dark blue polo shirts with the college logo. The background is a blue and white geometric design. Text at the top right says "Register Today at www.CerroCoso.edu". At the bottom, it says "The sky is the limit at Cerro Coso." and "TAKE flight" with a stylized logo. The college name "CERRO COSO COMMUNITY COLLEGE" is also visible.

CHAMBER LUNCHEON

RSVP today!



CHAMBER@RIDGECRESTCHAMBER.COM

January 9 — Continental Labor and Staffing Resources

Join the Ridgecrest Chamber at the **Historic USO Building** on **Tuesday, January 9 at 12pm**.



This month we will hear from Continental Labor and Staffing Resources. A full service labor and staffing resources office, Continental will review the tools they have available for local businesses.

Please RSVP by Friday, January 5, 2023 to the Chamber office 760-375-8331 or chamber@ridgecrestchamber.com

Lunch will be provided by Pizza Factory.

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

The Historic USO Building is located at 230 W. Ridgecrest Blvd

Your Chamber is dedicated to:

Building community

Strengthening the economy

Providing networking opportunities

Representing the interest of business to the government

Political action

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(760) 446-2796

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

NEW MEMBERS

Bloom Fitness Studio

Bloom Fitness Studio, is a carefully designed training and yoga sanctuary devoted to providing personalized fitness experiences. Founded by Alicia, the studio aims to revolutionize health and fitness by offering a private haven that emphasizes mental well-being alongside physical health.



The studio boasts a team of certified trainers and instructors who hold multiple certifications in personal training, yoga instruction, nutrition coaching, and weight loss specialization. Their commitment to excellence ensures a standard of quality in every session.

What distinguishes Bloom is its dedication to creating an exclusive training environment. Here, clients can experience focused, uninterrupted sessions without equipment sharing or distractions. This approach prioritizes individualized attention, ensuring clients' goals take center stage in a serene setting.

Bloom invites individuals to explore their yoga classes or schedule tailored personal training or nutrition coaching sessions. Their unique emphasis on privacy, personalized attention, and a small-group setting exemplifies their commitment to an exceptional customer experience.

Curious to explore the studio firsthand? Interested parties can book an informative session to tour the facilities and gain insights into the personalized training and specialized services offered. Bloom Fitness Studio looks forward to helping individuals achieve their health and fitness aspirations in a nurturing and personalized environment.

Find out more on Bloomridgecrest.com or by calling (573) 579-9526

Follow them on socials IG [@bloomridgecrest](https://www.instagram.com/bloomridgecrest) and FB [@bloomridgecrestCA](https://www.facebook.com/bloomridgecrestCA)

1515 N. Norma St, Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Information provided by member

Home Office SOLUTIONS

Create a workspace that works for you.



NEW MEMBERS

Flight Line Tap Room

Welcome to Flight Line Tap Room, your local haven for craft beer enthusiasts in Ridgecrest, CA. Nestled at 259 Balsam Street, this brew hangout is your go-to spot for an exceptional selection of craft beers available on tap or in cans.



At Flight Line Tap Room, we pride ourselves on offering a vibrant and diverse experience. Our tap selection features an array of beers. Not just limited to traditional pours, we also tantalize taste buds with beer slushies and a wide variety of cans and bottles to cater to every beer aficionado's palate.

But it's not just about the brews; it's about creating an atmosphere for everyone. Families can enjoy our collection of board games while savoring their favorite beverages. What truly sets us apart is our ever-evolving menu that introduces the best of both new and beloved brews to the local scene.

At Flight Line, the experience extends beyond the beer. We host an exciting lineup of events, ranging from taproom takeovers that showcase breweries to engaging activities like yoga classes and candle-making sessions. Stay updated with our happenings by following us on social media platforms like Untappd (flightlinetap.com), Facebook (facebook.com/FlightLineTap), and Instagram [@FlightLineTapRoom](https://instagram.com/FlightLineTapRoom) or by keeping an eye on our location.

Whether you're a craft beer enthusiast, a family looking for a fun hangout, or someone seeking unique events to attend, Flight Line Tap Room is your destination. Join us for an unforgettable experience, where great brews, good food, and engaging events converge to create lasting memories in the heart of Ridgecrest, California.

Information provided by member

Stay tuned to learn more about new members in a future newsletter:

Indigenous Home & Garden

Sam's Auto Body & RV

The Window Guy

The Royal Womb



Bloom Fitness Studio



Decanter Lounge



Ella's Party Creations

FULL SERVICE LAW OFFICE

LAW OFFICE OF DENNIS M. SCHUSTER

123 GRANDE WAY STE E

760-371-1126 SCHUSTERLAWGROUP.COM

FEBRUARY 22

02
22

T W E N T Y 2 4

INDIAN WELLS VALLEY

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK CONFERENCE

The premiere economic forecast event in the region.

TICKETS & INFORMATION
RIDGECREST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
(760) 375 8331 | 128 E. CALIFORNIA AVE

We provide insight into current, local, state, and national economies,
while addressing topics of interest to the community.

www.ridgecrestchamber.com/eoc



LABOR LAW CORNER

Use Caution When Granting Family Leave Before Employee Is Eligible

By Ellen Savage, December 15, 2023

My employee wants to take 12 weeks off for child bonding, but he has worked for us for only 11 months so he's not eligible for protected family leave time yet. Is there anything I need to be concerned about if we go ahead and grant his child bonding family leave time early?

Employees generally become eligible to take 12 weeks of job-protected child bonding time once they reach their one-year anniversary and have worked at least 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months. These laws apply to employers with 50 or more employees under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and employers of 5 or more under the California Family Rights Act (CFRA).



An employer who allows an employee to start child bonding time prior to their one-year anniversary should be aware that the time taken before the anniversary date will not count toward the 12-week job-protected entitlement.

This means that as of your employee's one-year anniversary, assuming he also meets the 1,250 hours worked requirement on his one-year anniversary, his job will be protected for an additional 12 weeks, despite the employee having been gone already for 4 weeks.

Note that this means your new employee will actually be able to take a total of 16 weeks, which is more time off than the law allows for other long-term employees.

FMLA Regulations

The FMLA regulations are clear that only the time after the employee's one-year anniversary would count toward the 12 weeks of job-protected leave.

"An employee may be on non-FMLA leave at the time he or she meets the 12-month eligibility requirement, and in that event, any portion of the leave taken for an FMLA-qualifying reason after the employee meets the eligibility requirement would be FMLA leave." (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 29, Section 825.110 (d)).

The preamble to the FMLA regulations addresses the seeming unfairness of a rule that doesn't count the time granted by a generous employer before the one-year mark as family leave. It says that while "this would result in newly hired employees being treated more favorably than long-term employees" this is in fact "not the result of the FMLA, but rather would result from the employer's own policies" of choosing to grant leave before an employee meets the eligibility requirements. (67942 Federal Register, Vol. 73, No. 222, Monday, November 17, 2008)

LABOR LAW CORNER, continued


In other words, the preamble says the FMLA regulations themselves are fair to everyone, and the employer is the one choosing to give more of a benefit to the new employee. The preamble goes on to say that an employer who feels this is unfair “could similarly voluntarily allow a more senior employee ... to extend a leave beyond the legally required 12 weeks.”

CFRA Regulations

The CFRA regulations do not address this issue in as much detail as do the FMLA regulations. However, the CFRA regulations do say: “The employer should designate the portion of the leave in which the employee has met the 12-month requirement as CFRA leave.” (California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 11087(g)(3)(B)) In addition, where a California family leave issue is not addressed directly by the CFRA regulations, California employers are to follow the FMLA rules. (California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 11096)

Therefore, the time taken before the one-year anniversary would likely not be counted as CFRA either.

Column based on questions asked by callers on the Labor Law Helpline, a service to California Chamber of Commerce preferred members and above. 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.




THE HR ADVANTAGE: Tools for Thriving Organizations

Presented by the Ridgecrest Chamber in partnership with Meith Operational Solutions President, Amy Alden, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

Each class is 1.5 hours followed by a Q&A session
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Register for classes individually (\$125 ea) or for the 6 class series and receive a discount

100% IN PERSON
At the Ridgecrest Chamber office



Register now at : www.ridgecrestchamber.com



CLASS 1
Types of Leave

Wednesday, January 17
10:00 am



CLASS 4
**Team Building/
Company Culture**

Wednesday, July 17
10:00 am



CLASS 2
Hiring Process

Wednesday, March 20
10:00 am



CLASS 5
**Policies and
Procedures**

Wednesday, September 18
10:00 am



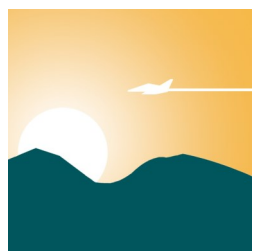
CLASS 3
**Supervisory Skills
and Disciplinary
Processes**

Wednesday, May 15
10:00 am



CLASS 6
**Year End/Changing
Employment Laws**

Wednesday, November 20
10:00 am



do business with

M E M B E R S

RENEWING MEMBERS in November 2023

760 Fitness

A&R Construction

A&R Roofing, LLC. - Crystal Avila

Altrusa Club of IWV

American Dream Auto Sales &
United Rent-A-Car

Cardinal Plumbing

College Community Services/
Hope Center

Desert Community Orchestra
Association

Desert Tortoise Preserve
Committee, Inc.

Desert Valleys Federal Credit Union

Elks Lodge, Ridgecrest #1913

GUNS4US, INC

HappiSnacks

JCJ Chavez Construction Inc.

JT4 LLC.

Liberty Ambulance Service

Mama Mia's Cakes and Treats

Mariposa Construction Inc.

RAW Media Productions LLC

Rotary Club of China Lake

Stater Bros. Market

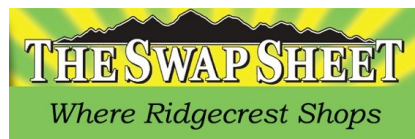
Tax Time Services Inc.

Tj. Frisbee
BICYCLES

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



CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE MEMBERS



PLATINUM & GOLD MEMBERS

RIDGECREST REGIONAL
HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

SIENNA PODIATRY - DR. HOLLY
SPOHN GROSS, DPM.

SYNECTIC SOLUTIONS, INC.

TEYA DEVELOPMENT, LLC

Bowman Asphalt, Inc.

Burkey, Cox, Evans & Bradford

Cerro Coso Community College

Desert Empire Fairgrounds

Electrified Solutions Electric, LLC

Electronic Payments, Inc.

Holiday Inn Express

Immanuel Christian School

IWV Water District

JT4, LLC

Liberty Ambulance

MWR (Morale Welfare & Rec.)

Oliver Law

Opportunities For Learning

PG&E

Primerica

RBD California Restaurants / KFC

Saalex Solutions

Sienna Wellness Institute

Sierra Sands Unified School District

Southern California Edison

Southern Inyo Healthcare District

T-Mobile

Toyota of Ridgecrest