

# BUSINESS VOICE

ISSUE 166 | NOV '22





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Business Voice is a publication of the  
Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce

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Issue 166 November 2022

# BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE

Chris Hill



Not sure about you, but October flew by way too quickly for me! It's a phenomenon that astounds me every year, though it's most likely due to the fact that there's just so much going on. As we continue on towards the end of 2022, the activities continue. Who ever said there's nothing to do in Ridgecrest?!?! Hot off the heels of a successful Fair, our community has the opportunity to take part in another fun weekend, with the Ridgecrest Petroglyph Festival happening November 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>. Your Chamber will have a table at the event, so be sure to stop by and say hi, while checking out the swag we'll have available!

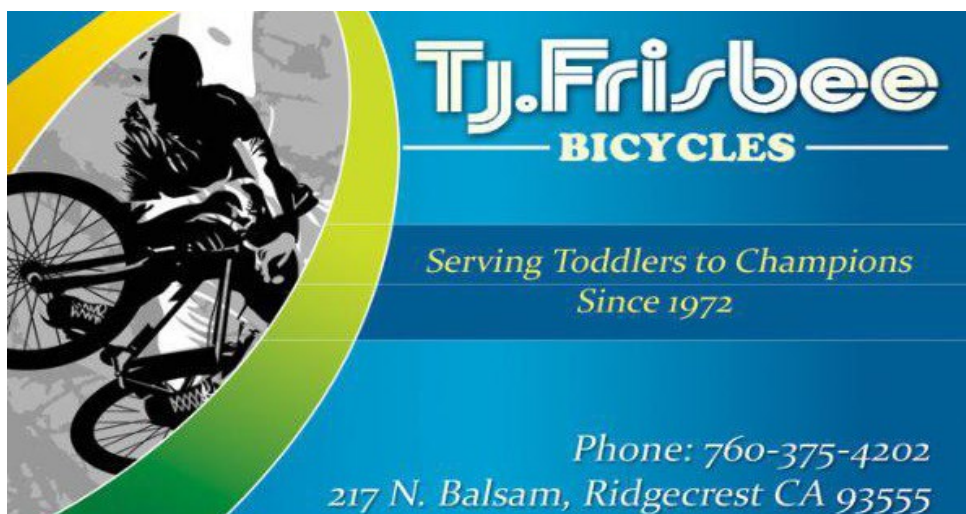
Speaking of events and things to do, remember to check out [RidgecrestEvents.com](http://RidgecrestEvents.com), where you'll be able to find information on all that's happening at any given time around the area. Be sure to add your own event, meeting, gathering, service opportunity, etc!

Remember that the Chamber has the electronic sign available for advertising, as well as spots available for community groups. The sign has amazing visibility, and the value is incredible based on ad cycles. We also have space just for you – our awesome Chamber members - in our monthly newsletters and weekly update emails. Let the public know what you have going on, utilizing all the various methods made available to you!

To close, I just want to touch on the holiday shopping frenzy that is nearly upon us. We face a battle here in our piece of paradise, with the all too common mentality of "I can't find anything local." I encourage you to fight the urge of 2-day shipping or the 2 hour drive, and first attempt to check around with your fellow small businessowners! Speaking of, Small Business Saturday is happening November 26<sup>th</sup>. Join in as we attempt to make a big impact by shopping small!

Be thankful, always, for all that you're blessed with! It's easy to find, if you truly look. I'm thankful for you, and this incredible community we're a part of!

Chris Hill, Chairman



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## November 8, 2022—Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

Join the Ridgecrest Chamber for our monthly luncheon at 12 noon on November 8, 2022 and hear a presentation **at the Historic USO** from Dr. Will Artis, Ph.D., Navy Fleet and Family Readiness Director, N9 at NAWS China Lake.

A leader with over 25 years experience in the military and private industry, Dr. Artis will speak about the MWR program offerings including sports and physical fitness activities, child development and youth programs and a variety of food and beverage services. He will also review their mission and community involvement.



**Please RSVP by noon on Friday, November 4, 2022.**

Join the Ridgecrest Chamber at the Historic USO Building on Tuesday, November 8 at 12 noon.

**Lunch will be provided by Casey's Restaurant**

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

**JOIN US IN PERSON—Tuesday, November 8, 2022 at the Historic USO.  
RSVP Today!**

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

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**Small Business Saturday is coming!** Are you a home based business interested in participating in an event at the Ridgecrest Chamber on Saturday, November 26? Let us know!

# NEW MEMBER



In 1993, a local resident of Newberry Springs, California, a

very small, rural town located about 16 miles East of Barstow, California off the 40 Interstate, named Larry Charette decided that he had enough of being taken advantage of by the large propane companies.

He wanted to start a propane company of his own built on customer service and fair prices. Larry started running operations out of a small shop located on his property on Silver Valley Road in Newberry Springs with one bobtail and one small crane truck. Larry and two partners were the only employees at the time and dedicated much of their personal lives building their propane business locally.

Before long, Silver Valley Propane had gained a lot of ground on their larger competitors and bought a brand-new bobtail and hired two new employees. Word started to spread that there was a more affordable option for propane delivery service and the company began to service the Barstow and Hinkley areas. By 2001, the company had grown so much that it built a new headquarters in Barstow and another increase in growth and customers by 2013 resulted in the company moving operations to Apple Valley, California.

After nearly 25 years, Silver Valley Propane has grown to be an established business with an exceptional reputation for customer service, competitive pricing, and safety. We are often referred to as "the local guys", a slogan we adopted shortly after beginning our business and

to this day we are still independently owned and operated.

November is their first official month operating in the Ridgecrest. Contact them today for more information!

Silver Valley Propane

[SVPropane.com/](http://SVPropane.com/) 760-252-4455

*Information contributed by member*



In 1992, Roger and Dianne Loewen noticed that there was a need in the area for short and long-term housing. As a result, the

Loewen's decided to take their twenty apartments at the Villa Capri apartment complex and convert them into fully furnished rentals. This was the birth of Temporary VIP housing.

In 2008, Temporary VIP Housing continued to add properties to our companies housing options. The business logo was also freshened up by Roger's son, Ryan, to provide an updated look for the business.

Temporary VIP Housing continues to provide high quality short and long-term housing. We have expanded our business to include around 80 properties, and our logo went through a redesign in the summer of 2019.

Temporary VIP Housing

[www.temporaryviphousing.com/](http://www.temporaryviphousing.com/) 760-371-1364

*Information contributed by member*



**Roger & Lorrie Young**  
**(760) 446-2796**

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



# NEW MEMBER



"We're a company that provides full service," says long time resident Jairo Avila, Owner of A & R Construction. He stresses how very local his business is by hiring and training local

employees. "We provide a full service from small work to repairs and remodels. We don't sub anything out. We do everything in house. We're a fast growing company. We've been in business for going on six years."

A & R Construction has a well-made website that elaborates what they do with Remodeling, Windows, Painting, and Fences. One can contact them through the site, but their phone number and email address are prominently displayed. Under "Why Choose Us," they say, "We combine quality workmanship, superior knowledge and low prices to provide you with service unmatched by our competitors. We have the experience, personnel and resources to make the project run smoothly. We can ensure a job is done on time. Work with us involves a carefully planned series of steps, centered around a schedule we stick to and daily communication."

Jairo got his start as a kid when his single mother would get him connected to townspeople during the summer. She didn't care if he was paid, she wanted him to learn. "I've been doing literally everything growing up, landscaping, drywall, concrete. You name it."

Then at Burroughs High he took construction classes and began working for himself. After high school, he started getting into landscaping, worked on the base for a while doing landscaping, and then worked with contractors who encouraged him to get his own license.

He tells us why he joined the Chamber, "Bernie (Mondragon) has been telling me to join for a long time. We were just so busy that we didn't have time to do it; but, my wife is helping me with all the advertising and legal stuff so now we have more time."

Jairo wants folks to know, "We're part of the community. We love Ridgecrest. We're a family owned, family oriented business."

A&R Construction  
Jairo Avila, owner

760-301-7026 or <http://arconstructionrc.com>

*Information contributed by Laura Quezada*



"We treat our customers like family," says Crystal Avila, Owner of A & R Roofing. "We're a local family business. From our home to your home, we're providing you with the

best customer service." They believe so strongly in this, that it is part of their mission statement:

"Our mission is to establish long lasting relationships with our clients by exceeding their expectations and gaining their trust through exceptional performance from every member of our team. At the end of the day, we couldn't do what we do without you. Our business is built upon an excellent customer experience and the satisfaction of knowing that the job is done right for you. We'll work on every building as if it were our own."

Crystal, the only woman roofing contractor in Ridgecrest, learned on the job working with her husband who has been working in the



## NEW MEMBER

construction field since he was young. She had a chance to get her C39 California Roofing Contractor's License, she says, "What other person wouldn't take that chance?"

She employs half a dozen trained professions. "We give them mandated training, safety training, how to install, tear off all that. They're completely trained and they have, previous years experience, whether it's from our company or another company."

She tells us, "Roofs are very important. I don't think people understand how important they are. Because they cover you and your valuables. You need to always make sure you've got a very good roof."

"I joined the Chamber of Commerce because it was recommended to us and I thought, 'Okay, I'll jump on the boat.' I think it would be a great opportunity to be more part of the community and have the community get to know us, not just the company, but actually see our faces and be more involved."

We want the community to know that we are local. We're from Ridgecrest. Everything we do goes back into our community."

A&R Roofing  
Crystal Avila, owner  
760-301-7026 or via email at  
a\_rconstruction2017@yahoo.com

*Information contributed by Laura Quezada*

**EZ RENTALS  
& SALES**

Founded in 1985, E-Z Rentals takes great pride in offering customers quality products with exceptional

customer service, and remaining our area's Low Price Leader. Lucky enough to be supported by outstanding employees who are committed to excellence, E-Z Rentals has now grown to over 20 locations. We are excited to continue helping our neighbors and friends with all of their home furnishings needs, while providing Our Carefree Guarantee! We carry new and used furniture, electronics, appliances and much more at low prices for sale or rent.

Contact EZ Rentals at 760-371-1368 or  
Chad at [choneywell@ezrentalsandsales.com](mailto:choneywell@ezrentalsandsales.com)  
*Information contributed by member*



Felicia Smith, CEO of Happisnacks, is an entrepreneur whose new company is now operating in Ridgecrest, CA. Happisnacks is a vending machine service in Ridgecrest.

Smith recognizes the busy lives of small business owners and wants to bring essential items like snacks and refreshments inside their place of business to serve employees or customers. Available vending machines can be for snacks, beverages, or a gumball machine. Happisnacks provides fast, quality service. The vending machine will always be presentable. Other vending machines cannot match the convenience Happisnacks will give! Smith writes, "I believe in putting our customers and community members first. Service is the cornerstone of Happisnacks vending and I know that my heart for service is good for our community. It also enables me to deliver exceptional value to each and every customer."

Happisnacks vision is "to be the premier vending service in the heart of Ridgecrest, California by delivering an exceptional customer experience while sharing values of service, integrity, and the community". Interested in getting a machine for your place of business?

Contact Felicia Smith at 760-977-0359 or visit her website [HappiSnack.com](http://HappiSnack.com)

SEND YOUR ADS, SPECIALS AND PROMOS TO  
[MARKETING@RIDGECRESTCHAMBER.COM](mailto:MARKETING@RIDGECRESTCHAMBER.COM)



# NEW MEMBERS



Dr. Christine Braid, Medical Director of Restoration Lab, has deep roots in our community. She was born and raised in Ridgecrest, is a

graduate of Burroughs High, met her husband here and has numerous family members in residence.

Her love for Ridgecrest and desire to help the community thrive figured into her decision to open her local practice. Her specialty is Family Practice; Wellness and Aesthetics are an additional part of her practice.

Restoration Lab is a full service medical spa, servicing all of your aesthetics needs and wellness. Services include injectables, laser hair removal, microneedling services, vascular mitigation and facial rejuvenation, B 12 shots, IV therapy, medical grade skincare and protocols, medical grade facials and chemical peels, supplements, weight and nutrition supplements, prescribed custom supplements, medical consultations and aesthetics plans.

Dr. Braid has a gentle and genuine presence. She tells us, "I'm a family practice physician by training. So we take care of birth to 110/115 however old you want to live, and the many stages of life - however you want to live it. Holistic care along the way, and being well for different people, encompasses different things.

"I specialize in holistic care, whole person care." She explains that from a holistic perspective she does not only look at your single symptom, she looks at your whole body. She provides an example, "Looking at how people want to express their beauty is one of those things. You can do it in weight, nutrition, and you can do in it heart health. I love skincare and, you know, we can age gracefully."

Restoration Lab has two nurse providers with local ties. One was born and raised here, the other has children living in the area. They have received extensive training from nationally recognized trainers.

Joining the Chamber of Commerce is one of the many ways Dr. Braid wants to serve her community and help it flourish. She says, "We joined the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce because they have a rich history of networking with small businesses and promoting each other and helping each other with a support system."

Restoration Lab  
Dr. Christine Braid  
714-232-9407

*Information contributed by Laura Quezada*



Established in 2005, Tridant Solutions is a professional and management services firm providing:

- supply chain sourcing and acquisition support
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  - safety audits, compliance and training programs
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- medical talent mobilization and onboarding to military, federal and private clients who have long-term, complex, and numerous support needs for their mission critical programs.

Also, in support of the federal government's small business programs, Tridant offers its 8(a) and woman-owned small business certifications to boost agency small business subcontracting goals. And to grow our capabilities and deepen our expertise, Tridant serves as joint venture partner and managing director in Trilex Solutions, LLC, an SBA approved, Mentor/Protégé joint venture enterprise.

Tridant's history of successful contract performance establishes the firm's reputation as a trusted partner and responsive service provider. They are knowledgeable industry leaders whose teams of dedicated professionals embody Tridant's values of integrity, work ethic, sense of urgency, and team



# NEW MEMBERS

spirit on a daily basis. By executing the mission in alignment with these values, they provide their mission-driven clients with exceptionally rated results and have a positive impact on their loyal clients' complex, deadline-oriented programs.

This year NAWCWD awarded Tridant a \$7.1million Command Reutilization and Disposal Services Contract. President and CEO of Tridant, Annette Palazuelos, chose to join the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce to grow the company's presence in the community.

[tridantsolutions.com/](http://tridantsolutions.com/) (877) 543-3586

*Information contributed by member*



3R Woodworx designs and builds custom cabinetry for all uses. The "R" in 3R stands for Ramos: brothers Angel and Edgar with their father, Jose. For residential customers they have been specializing in custom

cabinetry in kitchens; for business clients they can design whatever is needed. "Custom cabinetry, which includes kitchens, bathrooms, mantles staircases. Anything that's got to do with wood, and finished type of woodworking," explains Angel. They have designed and built for hospitals, gas stations, restaurants, office spaces to name a few.

If you tour their new spacious facility you can see that their commitment to efficiency can be well executed. They have been outgrowing work spaces and this isn't their first move. Angel says of their new location, "This was the biggest we could find for what we're doing. We wanted a lunch room and we have a gym that we're putting together. We had our workout stuff outside and it's either too hot or too cold. We have a bunch of bathrooms for everybody and storage space."

They have been developing systems to streamline production, which keeps the prices down for their customers. "We've gotten our kitchen process pretty good to where we can turn

them out in a week," says Edgar. You can be assured your individual tastes are reflected in their work: custom as opposed to prefabricated. "We custom color match paint, we do stain, we do all kinds of different things. Everything we use is water based. We use the newest, latest ingredients, no chemicals - no nothing. We really like it; it dries amazingly fast," Angel tells us.

With their recent move to the large facility, they have been able to expand their business to include selling specialized woodworking tools, leather working tools, exotic wood: walnut, zebra wood, purple hardwood. Families will appreciate that they plan to offer free woodworking classes for kids and fee-based classes for adults.

The brothers Ramos learned their trade from their father who had a construction company in Houston where he built track homes. But the brothers gravitated toward Finish Carpentry. Angel tells us, "As kids we built our first kitchen. I think I was 17. We milled the lumber from rough lumber all the way down to have a finished product. My dad had a small shop that was attached to our home. That's what started it."

The clear skies, mountains, stars and beauty of the desert plus the small town feel of Ridgecrest captivated and drew in in this family business. Angel was the first to the desert. He was hired in Trona to work as a welder. He decided to stay. Edgar came for a two-week visit and hasn't left yet. Eventually the whole family relocated from Texas.

When 3R first started in 2015, they worked mostly with contractors. With this recent move they chose to move into serving the public and commercial local clients. Which leads to their joining the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce. Angel emphasizes, "This was something that I specifically wanted to do a couple years ago but we weren't ready yet. We wanted to open to the public and we were only working with out of town contractors. We wanted to open this up to more people; we want to be a part of the community; we want more family, more people."

3R Woodworx  
Co-Owners Angel, Edgar, and Jose Ramos  
760-309-1200





**A&R Construction**



**Coffee Club**



**A&R Roofing**



**Maria Hayes - New Ambassador**



**Nicole Harper for School Board 2022**



**Restoration Lab**

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## LABOR LAW CORNER

### Factors to Consider When Deciding Whether to Pay for ‘Try-Out’ Time

This article is reprinted from CalChamber (10/21/2022) By Lisa Guzman

*If we ask a job applicant to demonstrate their job skills during an interview, do we have to pay them for their time?*

During the hiring process, an employer may find it useful to ask an applicant to demonstrate how they would perform a job. For example, an employer might ask a candidate to demonstrate how they would paint a wall, cook a gourmet meal, or lead an indoor rock-climbing class.

This is called “try-out” time and depending on what an applicant is asked to do in an interview, and how much time it takes, an employer may need to compensate them for their time.

#### Relevant Factors

According to the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) there are three factors to consider when determining whether try-out time must be paid.

- **Is the testing time reasonable?**

The first factor is whether the try-out time is “reasonable under the circumstances.” *DLSE Policies and Interpretations Manual Sec. 46.8.*

The amount of time needed to demonstrate a job skill will depend on the facts of each case. For example, it would take less time for an applicant to show how they would safely stack boxes than it would for an applicant to demonstrate the skills necessary to teach a ballet class.

According to the DLSE, the rate of pay for an occupation can be used as a guide to determine the amount of time necessary for a try-out. *DLSE Policies and Interpretations Manual Sec. 46.8.1.*

This means that higher paying jobs typically can require longer try-out periods. If the testing time is reasonable, then pay most likely will not be required.

- **Is the applicant performing any productive work?**

A second factor is whether there is any productivity derived from the work the applicant performs. *DLSE*



*Policies and Interpretations Manual Sec. 46.8.*

During a try-out, an applicant might be asked to demonstrate how they would varnish a piece of furniture. If that piece of furniture is then sold to a customer, then the employer is getting a benefit from the try-out time, and the applicant would have to be paid for their time.

To avoid having to pay an applicant for a try-out, employers should make sure that there is no productive work performed by a prospective employee during an interview.



• **Is the time, in fact, training as opposed to testing skills?**

The third relevant factor is if the try-out time is used for training as opposed to testing job skills. *DLSE Policies and Interpretations Manual Sec. 46.8.*

For example, if an employer uses try-out time to teach an applicant how to use the employer's computer software, the employer is deriving a benefit from the applicant's try-out and this time would have to be paid. If an employer uses the time solely to assess an applicant's skill in using the software, this time will qualify as try-out time.

**If in Doubt, Better to Compensate**

Employers should be mindful of when an applicant's demonstration of job skills requires pay. If a job skills demonstration takes an unreasonable amount of time or involves productive work or training that will benefit the employer, an employer will need to pay the applicant for their time.

If in doubt, the best practice is to compensate an applicant for the try-out time.

*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](http://www.hrcalifornia.com).*

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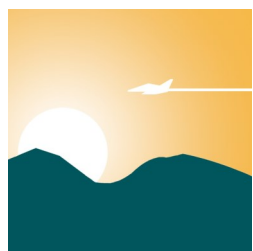


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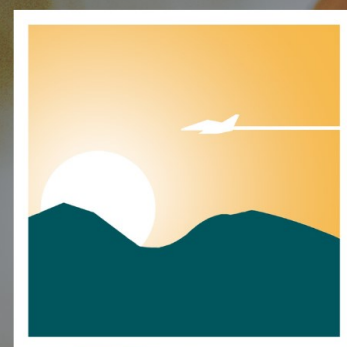
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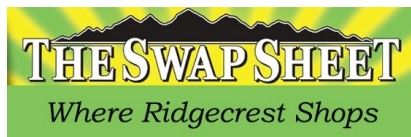
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