



CITY OF BANNING STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Elizabeth Gibbs, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Marisol Lopez, Economic Development Manager
Elizabeth Gibbs, City Manager

MEETING DATE: May 26, 2026

SUBJECT: Small Business Recognition Month – Recognition of La Villa Burgers and Celebration of New Ownership and Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for Gus Jr. No. 7

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

- 1.) Award a Certificate of Recognition to La Villa Burgers in recognition of Small Business Recognition Month; and
- 2.) Recognize the new ownership and recent ribbon-cutting ceremony for Gus Jr. No. 7, celebrating continued local investment and economic growth within the City of Banning.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Banning recognizes outstanding small businesses that contribute to the strength, resilience, and vitality of the local economy. As part of this effort, the City highlights select businesses during City Council meetings and through the City's website and social media platforms.

May is nationally recognized as Small Business Month, a time dedicated to celebrating the essential role small businesses play in driving economic growth, creating jobs, and enhancing community character. In alignment with this national observance, the City of Banning is proud to spotlight local businesses that demonstrate excellence, innovation, and meaningful community impact.

La Villa Burgers is a family-owned restaurant located in downtown Banning across from the courthouse. Since taking ownership in 2017, owner Ulysses has continued to invest in the business, improve the property, enhance customer service, and provide quality dining options to the community.

La Villa Burgers is widely recognized for its welcoming atmosphere, affordable meals, and menu offerings including burgers, fish sandwiches, and other family favorites. Ulysses is also known for personally engaging with customers and supporting the community through annual FREE hamburger meal giveaways the day before Thanksgiving Day as well as other community-focused efforts.

In addition to operating La Villa Burgers, Ulysses recently expanded his investment in the City of Banning through the purchase of Gus Jr. No. 7, further demonstrating his continued confidence in the City's economic future and business community. This business has contributed positively to the appearance and vitality of the Ramsey Street corridor while continuing to serve residents, visitors, and local families.

JUSTIFICATION:

California's small businesses account for over 99 percent of all businesses in the state and employ more than 7 million people, underscoring their critical role in economic vitality. At the local level, small businesses are essential to the City of Banning's economy, contributing to job creation, workforce development, and overall community well-being. Small businesses play a critical role in supporting local economic development, job creation, and community identity.

La Villa Burgers is a family-owned and operated business that has become an important part of the Banning community through its continued investment, customer service, and commitment to maintaining a welcoming family-oriented restaurant. Ulysses's leadership and reinvestment into local businesses reflects the type of entrepreneurship and community partnership the City seeks to recognize during Small Business Recognition Month.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Gus Jr. No. 7, Ulysses expressed his appreciation for the support received from the community and reaffirmed his commitment to continuing investment in the City of Banning and improving the dining experience for residents and visitors alike. As the City concludes the final week of Small Business Recognition Month, the City of Banning encourages residents and visitors to continue supporting local businesses year-round. Local businesses are the backbone of the community's economy, provide local employment opportunities, generate economic activity, and help shape the identity and character of Banning.

This recognition also aligns with the ***City of Banning's Banning 2030 – Designing Our Future NOW! Economic Development Framework by supporting:***

- ***Tier 1 Priorities:*** Advancing a clear, business-friendly economic vision and strengthening partnerships with local businesses and entrepreneurs.

- ***Tier 2 Priorities:*** Supporting small business growth, encouraging reinvestment in commercial corridors, enhancing hospitality and dining opportunities, and promoting economic activity within the community.

La Villa Burgers' continued investment and expansion within the City demonstrates confidence in Banning's future and positively contributes to the City's long-term economic development goals.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Certificate of Recognition_La Villa Burger.pdf](#)