



**SAN BENITO COUNTY
AGENDA ITEM
TRANSMITTAL FORM**

Dom Zanger
District No. 1
Vice-Chair

Kollin Kosmicki
District No. 2
Chair

Mindy Sotelo
District No. 3

Angela Curro
District No. 4

Ignacio Velazquez
District No. 5

Item Number: 3.1

MEETING DATE: 04/08/2025

DEPARTMENT: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM PREPARER: Vanessa Delgado

DEPT HEAD/DIRECTOR: Henie Ring

SUBJECT:

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Approve Certificates of Recognition for the Cesar Chavez Award recipients Maria Romero, Julio Salazar, and Veronica Lezama.

SBC FILE NUMBER: 156

AGENDA SECTION:

REGULAR AGENDA

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

The Latino Coalition of San Benito County will be holding an event to honor this year's Cesar Chavez Award recipients Maria Romero, Julio Salazar, and Veronica Lezama on Saturday, March 29th.

Each of these awardees has demonstrated a deep commitment to service, leadership, and advocacy in the spirit of César Chávez.

Julio Salazar came to the United States at the age of 17 not knowing the language, but tells a story about the warm hearted people of Hollister that gave him the confidence to serve in his community. His civic involvement began while advocating at school for his children Julio Jr., Alexa, and Roxanne. Julio's passion for education and student rights resulted in his election as past president of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) for the high school's migrant program. His effort to get more parents involved led to increased meeting attendance. In his first year as president, participation rose to 160 active parents. Following his work as PAC president, Julio also served as the Region One president and state representative for the [Santa Clara County Office of Education Migrant Education Program](#). Region One includes 34 school districts across the counties of San Benito, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco,

San Mateo and Alameda serving over 200,000 students.

As the leader of Mobile Ministries, Captain Romero has been a driving force in delivering food, rental, and utility assistance, as well as spiritual care, throughout California's Coastal Valley—from Hollister to Soledad and beyond. Her dedication to farmworker communities is particularly evident in her evening outreach, where she meets laborers after long shifts to provide meals, support, and a listening ear. Through strong partnerships with the Soledad Police Department, Mujeres Campesinas, and countless local volunteers, Captain Romero has built a trusted network of compassion. Her impact goes beyond immediate relief—she brings dignity, consistency, and hope to those who are too often overlooked or underserved. Most recently, under her leadership, the Salvation Army Hollister Corps partnered with the Cesar Chavez Foundation to launch a powerful new initiative focused on empowering migrant workers and supporting the unhoused. As Captain Romero put it, “By reducing barriers to education and providing essential support, we’re creating a lasting impact in San Benito County.” Whether unloading thousands of pounds of food from the canteen or offering spiritual care at a community center, Captain Romero shows up for people with love and purpose. Her unwavering presence reminds farmworkers that they matter—and that they are not alone. Captain Maria Romero embodies servant leadership. Tireless, humble, and deeply rooted in the community, she is a true champion for farmworkers and an inspiration to us all.

Veronica Lezama was born in Hollister and graduated from Hollister High. She is deeply rooted in community service as a daughter of farmworker parents; her early experiences shaped a lifelong commitment to uplifting others and advocating for justice. Her family's involvement with the United Farm Workers (UFW) union instilled in her the values of perseverance and equity as she marched alongside iconic labor leaders Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. A graduate of San Jose State University, Veronica currently serves as the Branch Chief of Regional Planning and Local Development Review, as well as the District Native American Liaison for the California Department of Transportation. In this role, she champions stakeholder collaboration, project development, and initiatives that enhance the transportation system for more resilient communities. For over 30 years, Veronica has engaged in social activism and youth mentorship, empowering the next generation with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to address societal challenges.

RESOLUTION OR ORDINANCE NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:

N/A

CONTRACT NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:

N/A

RFP AND BID HISTORY:

N/A

LAST CONTRACT AMOUNT OR N/A:

N/A

CONTRACT HISTORY (Describe all amendments and previous contracts):

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 1. Operational Development & Excellence

No

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 2. Planning And Sustainable Growth

No

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 3. Technology

No

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 4. Community Engagement

Yes

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 5. Health & Safe Community

No

BUDGETED:

N/A

BUDGET ADJUSTMENT NEEDED:

N/A

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

UNFUNDED MANDATE:

N/A

SBC BUDGET LINE ITEM NUMBER:

N/A

CURRENT FY COST:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Certificates of Recognition for the Cesar Chavez Award recipients Maria Romero, Julio Salazar, and Veronica Lezama.

ATTACHMENTS:

Certificates of Appreciation