

SANTA FE SPRINGS BUSINESS

Official publication of the Santa Fe Springs Chamber of Commerce / www.sfschamber.com / Vol. 38, No. 1 / January-February 2025

City of Santa Fe Springs Swears In New Council and Appoints New Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem



Mayor William K. (Bill) Rounds



Mayor Pro Tem Joe Angel Zamora



Councilmember John M. Mora



Councilmember Juanita Martin



Councilmember Annette Rodriguez

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On December 10, the City Council held a recognition ceremony for outgoing Mayor Jay Sarno with presentations from local dignitaries, surrounding cities, the Chamber of Commerce, and school districts.

A brief swearing-in ceremony and the appointment of a new Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem also took place during the Council meeting. John Mora and Joe Angel Zamora were sworn into four-year terms of office, expiring November of 2028.

After the conclusion of the swearing-in ceremony, the City Council reorganized and appointed William K. (Bill) Rounds as Mayor and Joe Angel Zamora as Mayor Pro Tem.

Bill Rounds will be serving his fourth term as Mayor and Joe Angel Zamora will be serving his second term as Mayor Pro Tem on the Santa Fe Springs City Council.

Bill Rounds and Joe Angel Zamora will serve as Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem respectively through the end of the calendar year. Annette Rodriguez and Juanita Martin continue to serve as Councilmembers. Together, the City Council has the common goal to work together and build a bright future for Santa Fe Springs.

Mayor William K. (Bill) Rounds is serving his fourth term since being first elected

in 2007. He served as Mayor in 2012, 2017 and 2020. During his tenure as a Councilmember, he has served as liaison to the Historical and Community Preservation Advisory Committee, Senior Advisory Committee, Park and Recreation Advisory Committee, and Heritage Arts Advisory Committee.

Mr. Rounds has also served as a member of the Finance Audit Sub-Committee, Budget Sub-Committee and Capital improvement Project Sub-Committee.

Mayor Rounds was born in Concord, Massachusetts and moved to Santa Fe Springs with his parents in 1951. He attended local schools and graduated from Santa Fe High School

in 1968. For 11 years, Mr. Rounds served as a Santa Fe Springs Planning Commissioner. He has been an active member of several Committees and Organizations: American Cancer Society Relay for Life, Santa Fe Springs 50th and 60th Anniversary Celebration, Santa Float and former Coach and Board Member for Metropolitan Little League.

Mr. Rounds retired after working 41 years as a Supervisor for the LA County Sanitation District (LACSD) in the Field Engineering Department. He and his wife Jennifer, have four adult children and nine grandchildren.

Mayor Pro Tem Joe Angel Zamora is a lifelong resident of Santa Fe Springs and is serving his third term on the City Council since first being elected in 2015. Mr. Zamora was last appointed to Mayor Pro Tem in 2022.

This past 2024 year, he served as the Council Appointed Delegate to the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, 91/605/405 Corridor Cities Committee, Southeast Water Coalition Board, and an alternate for the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG).

Councilmember Zamora has been involved in the community for several years through his church, in the City's sports programs, as a coach for Santa Fe High School, and as a participant in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

Joe Angel has been a mem-
continued on page 3

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Carlos Gallardo, Farmers and Merchants Bank

A Bittersweet Farewell: Celebrating Kathie Fink's 26 Years of Leadership at the Santa Fe Springs Chamber of Commerce

As the president of the Santa Fe Springs Chamber, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey I've shared over the past 10 years, largely shaped by the unwavering dedication of our chamber CEO, Kathie Fink. Though a retirement date has yet to be set, it is with mixed emotions that I announce her upcoming retirement—a bittersweet moment for all of us who have had the privilege of working alongside her.

Kathie's leadership has been the bedrock of our chamber's success. Under her guidance, we have not only grown in numbers but also in our mission to serve the business community. Her commitment to fostering a vibrant economic environment has been evident in every initiative we've undertaken. Kathie has tirelessly advocated for local businesses, ensuring they have the support and resources needed to thrive.

One of Kathie's most remarkable qualities is her ability to foster collaboration between the chamber and the city. This partnership has been a cornerstone of her leadership, resulting in mutual growth and prosperity for our community. By bridging the gap between local government and businesses, she has created a supportive ecosystem that benefits everyone involved.

Throughout her tenure, Kathie has put in countless hours preparing for and supporting early morning or late evening events, whether they be chamber events or Youth Enrichment Fund (YEF) activities. Her dedication to our cause is unparalleled, and she has proven time and again that her passion for our community knows no bounds.

Beyond her role as CEO, Kathie has been a friend, a mentor, and an inspiration to all of us fortunate enough to work with her. Her genuine care for others, coupled with her wisdom and experience, has made a lasting impact on everyone in our chamber. She has nurtured not just professional relationships, but personal ones, fostering a sense of community that will endure long after her departure.

As we prepare to say goodbye to Kathie, we celebrate her legacy of leadership, commitment, and community spirit. While we will miss her presence, we know that her influence will continue to guide us as we carry forward the values, she has instilled in us. Thank you, Kathie, for everything. You will always be a cherished part of the Santa Fe Springs Chamber family.



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SFS City Council continued from page 1

ber of the City's Parks and Recreation Committee, has participated in the City's Christmas Float Program, and served as a Planning Commissioner.

Councilmember John M. Mora was first elected to the City Council in November of 2018 and is serving his second term on the Council. He was appointed and served his first term as Mayor in 2021.

Councilmember Mora is a lifelong resident of Santa Fe Springs. Prior to being elected to the City Council and after his first term on the Council, he served as a Planning Commissioner.

John is a former City employee who worked in aquatics, transportation, and on the City's Christmas Float Program. Councilmember Mora also participated in various community volunteer programs, including Santa Fe High School's Mentor Program, Booster Clubs for Santa Fe High School's band, water polo and cross country teams, and the Little Lake City School District Wellness Committee.

Councilmember Mora has a chiropractic business that has operated in the City for over 20 years. He completed his undergraduate studies at Rio Hondo Community College, California State University Fullerton, and California State University Los Angeles. Mr. Mora received his Doctor of Chiropractic Degree from Southern California University of Health Sciences. Councilmember Mora and his wife have five children.

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‘Smiles and Schmoozing’ at November Networking Lunch

The Santa Fe Springs Chamber turned a regular lunch hour into a networking power hour on November 21 at Clearman’s Steak ‘n Stein. The event was so well attended that finding a seat felt like winning the lottery.

Local professionals dove into plates of mouthwatering burgers and baked potatoes, hearty sides, and plenty of Clearman’s famous cheese bread, all while juggling conversations, business cards, and possibly a few crumbs. The laughter and chatter echoed louder than the clinking of glasses, proving once again that networking works better with good food among friends.

The Santa Fe Springs Chamber served up another successful event, reminding us that conducting business doesn’t have to be boring. Follow us at sfschamber.com to find out about upcoming events that will prove to be a valuable investment.



Proud to be a member of the SFS Chamber of Commerce as attendees pose for a photo.

Welcome One and All to the Santa Fe Springs Chamber!

The Santa Fe Springs Chamber of Commerce rolled out a warm welcome to its newest members during the New Member Welcome event that took place on November 9. Held at the chamber office, the staff took the opportunity to give the new members a “walk-through” of how the chamber can work for them with a brief explanation of marketing, member programs and networking events, legislative affairs, and the like. “This event is not just about welcoming new businesses; it’s about empowering them to grow and succeed within our community,” said a chamber representative. The SFS Chamber is committed to providing resources to ensure that every member has the tools to flourish.



Chamber members are feeling the spirit of the holiday season.

Tamales, Margaritas, and Networking Cheer at the Betty Wilson Center

The Betty Wilson Center was the place to be on December 18 as chamber members and potential members gathered for the much-anticipated annual Network at Noon Tamales and Margaritas lunch! It was a fiesta of flavors, connections, and a dash of holiday luck!

With over 50 attendees, tables quickly filled while the Chamber CEO, Kathie Fink, and President, Carlos Gallardo, welcomed one and all. Guests indulged in the most delicious tamales, washed down with perfectly crafted margaritas.

The highlight? The raffle! Attendees use this opportunity to showcase their business as they take the microphone to introduce themselves, their business, and describe their door prize. Lucky winners are drawn from the business card box with prizes ranging from gift baskets to holiday goodies.

With full bellies and new connections, everyone left the event feeling merry and bright. Who knew business networking could taste this good?

Networking @ Noon
11:30am - 1:00pm

SFS Chamber members and non-members getting together for business-to-business networking lunch.

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20 FEB	Gatherings 'n Stuff 9306 Firestone Blvd. Downey	
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Ribbon-Cutting Celebration at Driven Strength Club

On November 14, the community gathered for a lively ribbon-cutting ceremony at Driven Strength Club, celebrating a new fitness destination in Santa Fe Springs! Thank you to everyone who joined us to explore the exciting offerings at this vibrant gym.

Driven Strength Club is dedicated to helping individuals get stronger, move better, and feel happier. With personal training, co-working spaces, and a members-only event area, it's designed for a supportive fitness experience. Located at 12311 Telegraph Road, just beyond the famous bridge, the gym is open Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

A special thanks goes to owner James Lee for welcoming us to this celebration. For more information, call (562) 207-5628 and the Driven Strength Club community today!



Sonic Drive-In Hosts Preview Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony



On December 9, Sonic Drive-In held a preview ribbon-cutting ceremony marking a significant milestone in the long-awaited grand opening of the new eatery in Santa Fe Springs. After more than seven years of planning and anticipation, the community gathered to celebrate this exciting addition to the local dining scene.

The event featured Sonic owners Clinton Wesselink, Devon Wesselink, and Richard Wesselink and Jeff Hopkins, head of Real Estate and Development. Guests enjoyed a sneak peek at Sonic's delicious menu, showcasing the classic favorites that have made the chain a beloved choice for fast-food lovers.

"This preview event is a testament to the hard work and dedication that has gone into bringing Sonic to our city," said Mayor Jay Sarno. "We are excited to welcome this new dining option to Santa Fe Springs and look forward to the joy it will bring to our residents."



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Octapharma Plasma
Pioneer Custom Electrical Products

6 Years

Alicia Fombona - Island Legacy Ventures, Inc.
Azelis Americas LLC
Los Angeles Cable TV Access Corporation dba LA36
Options for Learning

3 Years

CBM Real Estate & Home Loans

2 Years

Audio City USA
Boxes Plus
KW Commercial Real Estate – Rob Marin
Mike Topanga, Inc.

1 Year

Aardwolf America LLC
Delta 4 Environmental, Inc.
L.B. Johnson ACE Hardware
Los Angeles Skills Academy
Optimal Health & Wellbeing
RPW United Agencies Insurance
The Green Olive

There is No Such Thing as a Tax Assessor

By Los Angeles County Assessor Jeffrey Prang

Editor's Note: Annual Secured Property Tax Bills are prepared and mailed by the Treasurer and Tax Collector in October of each year. The first installment of that tax bill is due on November 1 and becomes delinquent by the close of business on December 10. In light of the deadline, Assessor Prang wanted to expose the term "tax Assessor" as a non-entity and when used, can become problematic.

Whenever I have the opportunity to speak to members of the community, I always begin, importantly, by telling the audience what I do not do. I do this because the one thing I don't do as Assessor is the one thing almost everybody thinks I do - I do not collect taxes! The person responsible for collecting taxes has a very intuitive title, she is called the Tax Collector!

Candidly, the property tax administrative system is very confusing. There are multiple departments that each have a different piece of the system. The Assessor is the only one of those departments headed by an elected official, which may be why people gravitate toward my office with questions that actually belong to another department.

One reason for the confusion is the inexplicable yet universal use of the term "Tax Assessor." I have been the Assessor for 10 years, and to the best of my knowledge, the office of "tax assessor" does not, and has never really existed in the United States, except in a few very limited jurisdictions far from California. I find it fascinating that the term is so commonly used even though there is no history in this country of such a position.

Here's where the misuse of the term tax assessor becomes problematic. The term tax assessor is actually a conflation of two separate offices, that of the Assessor and that of the Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTC). In the Assessor's office, more than 50% of all calls we receive from the public

are actually regarding Tax Collector issues. This can be very frustrating to a member the public who calls with an issue and then feels that they are getting the runaround as they are routed to a different department.

In my experience, property owners who call for the "tax assessor" are almost always routed to my office. However, nine out of 10 of those calls are actually for the Tax Collector. This means that when we receive those calls we regrettably have to inform the property owner that they reached the wrong department. If the questions are regarding basic information that we have knowledge of, we do try to answer them ourselves. We also can provide tax bills to those who request them as a way of supporting our colleagues at the TTC. But often time, taxpayers end up getting transferred to the TTC.

Here is a very short primer on how the system works. When a property is sold, a deed is recorded with the County Registrar Recorder. Or, when there is new construction, a permit is issued by the local city. Those deeds and permits are then transmitted to my office, the Assessor, at which time we conduct an appraisal of value. That value data is then sent to the Auditor-Controller, a department most are not familiar with. The Auditor-Controller is actually the department that tells you what you owe – they add the tax rates, direct assessments, etc. The Auditor-Controller then transfers the data to the Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTC) who issues the bills and collects payments and which handles issues such as late penalties, lost bills, and payment plans.

As an elected administrator of a little known and understood public office, one of the biggest challenges I face is getting vital information about our services and how to access those services to the public. My office dedicates a great deal of effort to helping the public navigate the complexity

of the property tax administrative system, but in a County with over 10 million residents and covering more than 4700 square miles, this is a big task and requires an ongoing effort, which I am committed to providing.

While this missive may not solve the confusion over offices responsibilities, you now know that there is no "tax assessor," but rather, there is an Assessor and a Treasurer and Tax Collector and which one does what.

Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang leads the largest local public property assessment agency in the nation. His office of about 1,400 appraisers and support staff are dedicated to creating an accurate and timely property Assessment Roll. This year, the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office conducted more than 2.5 million real estate and business assessments valued at just over \$2 trillion.

UPCOMING RIBBON CUTTING CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025



01/15

WED

LA SKILLS ACADEMY

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
11627 Telegraph Road, Suite 103
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670



01/22

WED

JALIXCO ARTESANIA MEXICANA

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Mexican Artisan Pottery
8541 Wellsford Pl. Ste. H
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670



01/29

WED

OPTIMAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Jeanie Sauder - Health & Wellness Coach
SFS Chamber Office: 12016 Telegraph Rd.
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670



02/12

WED

HORIZON NURSERY

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Under New Ownership
9919 Cederdale Dr. Santa Fe Springs CA
90670.

MORE INFORMATION

562-944-1616

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A happy group of mentors and mentees hold up their completed Care Bags.



Participants enjoy the festive project for CAPC, Inc.

YEF Mentors and Mentees Unite for Charity at Annual Lunch

On December 10, the Youth Enrichment Fund (YEF) held its annual Mentor Charitable Lunch in the Mendez Gymnasium at Santa Fe High School. This heartwarming event brought together mentors and mentees to support CAPC, Inc., a nonprofit orga-

nization dedicated to serving the community members with developmental disabilities.

The highlight of the afternoon was the assembly of hygiene and cleaning supply Care Bags, all made possible by donations from the mentors. With

teamwork and dedication, everyone packed the holiday red bags to ensure they would be ready to assist individuals in need.

Following their charitable efforts, participants enjoyed a delicious lunch, sharing stories and strength-

ening the bonds that make the YEF program so impactful. Holiday music and camaraderie filled the gymnasium, leaving everyone with a sense of purpose and joy.



SANTA FE SPRINGS CHAMBER/LEAGUE YOUTH ENRICHMENT FUND

"Future Endeavors"

ESSAY CONTEST FOR 9TH-12TH GRADE STUDENTS

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO BE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL? WE WANT TO HEAR ALL ABOUT IT!

Write an essay, in which you organize your thoughts about the path for your current career choice. Be sure to explore the reasons for your interest and how these interests have led you to this specific career path. The essay should include any research you have completed to explore your career choice and the education required to obtain this career. Educate the reader about the motivation for and knowledge about the career path you have chosen.




Enter!
to Win!

1st Place: \$100 Amazon Gift Card
2nd Place: \$75 Amazon Gift Card
3rd Place: \$50 Amazon Gift Card

Deadline for submission: Friday, January 24, 2025.
Turn in essay to school representative or call (562) 944-1616.

SANTA FE SPRINGS CHAMBER/LEAGUE YOUTH ENRICHMENT FUND




"STUDENTS ARE THE FUTURE" POSTER CONTEST

5TH THROUGH 8TH GRADERS

CREATE A POSTER OR A DIGITAL SLIDE PRESENTATION ABOUT A CAREER THAT INTERESTS YOU!

- WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?
- WHAT INTERESTS YOU ABOUT THAT CAREER?
- WHAT EDUCATION IS REQUIRED FOR THAT CAREER?



1ST PLACE
\$50 AMAZON GIFT CARD

2ND PLACE
\$30 TARGET GIFT CARD

3RD PLACE
\$20 TARGET GIFT CARD

Contest is open to students or residents of Santa Fe Springs and who are in grades 5th through 8th. Deadline for submission: Friday, January 24, 2025.

Turn in poster to school office or email digital slides to school representative.

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Alicia Fombona
DRE #01367461



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Santa Fe Springs Chamber 58th Annual Golf



Monday, April 7, 2025

Hacienda Golf Club 718 East Road La Habra Heights, CA 90631

Golf Format - Four Person Scramble

ENTRY FEE

Golf Foursome \$1,200
 Individual Golfer \$300



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

8:30AM - 10:00AM
 Player Check-In
 Putting Contest Open
 Breakfast
 Morning Libations

10:00AM
 Shotgun Start

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ROUND
 Social 3:00PM
 Awards Dinner and Program 3:30PM

CORPORATE SPONSORS

Gold Sponsor - \$4,000

Two-Foursomes; commemorative gift for each player; name on website & brochure; program recognition; reserved seating at Awards Dinner; name on all advertising; name on sponsor banner & tee sign; 200 raffle tickets; exclusive recognition at a hole; and one feather flag.

Silver Sponsor - \$3,000

One-Foursome; commemorative gift for each player, name on website & brochure, program recognition; reserved seating at Awards Dinner; name on all advertising, name on sponsor banner & tee sign; 100 raffle tickets; exclusive recognition at a hole; and one feather flag.

Bronze Sponsor - \$2,000

One-Foursome; name on website & brochure; program recognition; reserved seating at Awards Dinner; name on sponsor banner; and name on selected advertising.

CONTEST SPONSORS

Hole-In-One Sponsor - \$600 Exclusive hole signage; recognition on all advertising & awards program **SOLD GILMAR Automotive Group**

Putting Contest - \$350 Recognition on all advertising including contest signage & awards program.

Longest Drive Contest - \$350 Recognition on all advertising including hole signage & awards program.

Senior Longest Drive Contest - \$350 Recognition on all advertising including hole signage & awards program.

Closest To The Pin Contest - \$350 Recognition on all advertising including hole signage & awards program.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORSHIPS

Dinner Sponsor - \$2,500 Seating for two at awards dinner; name & link on website; program recognition; exclusive signage on podium, lobby entrance, buffet tables & at every dining table (sign & literature); special announcement at Award's Dinner.

Golf Cart Sponsor - \$2,000 Banner on all golf carts; name and link on website. **SOLD Serv-Wel Disposal & Recycling**

Commemorative Golfer Gift - \$1,500 Name/logo on all Gold & Silver golfer gifts; name & link on website.

Photo Sponsor - \$1,000 Name/logo & event info on every golfer photo frame; name & link on website. **SOLD CR&R Waste & Recycling Services**

Everything But Golf Sponsor - \$1,000 Name & link on website; program recognition; seating for two at Awards Dinner; name on all advertising; name on sponsor banner & tee sign; and 50 raffle tickets.

Bag Sponsor - \$600 Name/logo on all swag bags handed to every golfer.

Alcohol Tee Sponsor - \$400 Includes exclusive recognition at the hole; display table & 2 chairs at the hole; lunch for two (Awards Dinner sold separate); network with all golfers.

Tee Sponsor - \$300 Exclusive recognition at the hole; display table & 2 chairs; lunch for two (Award's Dinner sold separate); network with all golfers.

Cigar Sponsor - \$250 Company name/logo label on each cigar. **SOLD KW Commercial Real Estate - Rob Marin**

Green Sign - \$100 A sign on the green recognizing your business.

Raffle Sponsor - Donate a raffle item of \$100 or more to receive signage near the item & recognition in the program.

Golf Ball Sponsor - Sponsor provides golf ball sleeves for swag bags

Turkey Talk at November Business Card Exchange Sunrise Breakfast



YMCA of Greater Whittier President/ CEO Curt Skotnicki receiving a certificate of appreciation from Ambassador Chair Jerry Pinkston of Heartland Payment Systems.

On November 6, the YMCA of Greater Whittier sponsored the SFS Chamber Business Card Exchange Sunrise Breakfast, an event that brought together local professionals for a morning filled with networking, collaboration, and shared vision. Held at the YMCA's East Whittier facility, the breakfast provided an energetic start to the day as attendees connected over coffee, pancakes, and breakfast sandwiches catered by McDonalds – Santa Fe Springs.

The event's agenda combined structured roundtable discussions and "Toss the Turkey" Ice Breaker game. Participants exchanged ideas, shared their professional journeys, laughed, and discovered potential partnerships to support each other's goals.

The highlight of the morning was a brief keynote from YMCA leadership, who emphasized the importance of cultivating relationships within the community and the YMCA's ongoing role in empowering individuals and families. Attendees left not only with a stack of business cards but

also a renewed sense of purpose and inspiration. The YMCA of Greater Whittier is more than just a fitness center – it's a hub for connection and

empowerment for the growth of local businesses and broader community.

Stay tuned for future events to engage, connect, and thrive!



Attendee catches the turkey for a brief introduction and tells her least favorite Thanksgiving side dish.



Proud chamber ambassadors Juan Aceves of YMCA of Greater Whittier and Steven Rosas of Ooma

SANTA FE SPRINGS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Market Your Business

Maximizing your Chamber Website

WEBSITE

Wednesday

February 19, 2025

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Must Register to Attend!

www.sfschamber.com

LOCATION:

12016 Telegraph Rd., Suite 100
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
(562) 944-1616

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- Monitor the traffic you attract online.
- Learn how to be listed high in search categories

THINGS TO KNOW ?

- MUST BRING A LAPTOP
- MUST BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND
- NO COST TO ATTEND

SANTA FE SPRINGS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Business Card Exchange

Sunrise Breakfast

Sponsored by:

WEBSITE

Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025

8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Members: \$20
Prospective Members: \$30

Location: 11700 Telegraph Rd.
Santa Fe Springs

Meet the City Management

Register at sfschamber.com or call (562) 944-1616

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Ugly Sweaters and Networking: A Business Card Exchange to Remember!



SFS Chamber President Carlos Gallardo and Embassy Suites staff.

December 4 marked the chamber's annual Ugly Sweater Business Card Exchange and was anything but business as usual. Sponsored by Embassy Suites, Downey, the event featured sweaters with blinking lights, a goose, tinsel and more. The competition for "Ugliest Sweater" was fierce—and hilarious since some were more cute than "ugly".

The morning kicked off with a delicious breakfast that could have rivaled Santa's feast. Holiday music played in the background, setting the perfect festive tone. Attendees tackled thought-provoking roundtable questions, played ice-breaker 'rein-

deer' games that had everyone laughing, and swapped business cards faster than you can say "Merry Networking!"

The event proved that mixing business with a dash of holiday cheer—and a sprinkle of silliness—can create connections that last far longer than tinsel on a tree. SFS Chamber professionals showed they can talk shop and rock a snowman sweater like no one else. Thank you, Embassy Suites' staff, who delivered yet another memorable morning. We hope to see you at our upcoming events located on our website at sfschamber.com.



The ladies in their festive wear pose for a photo during the "reindeer" game.



Melanie Acosta of The Tax Doctor Inc. wins the Ugly Sweater Contest!

New 2025 California Laws: Artificial Intelligence, Octopuses, Cannabis Cafes and More

By Juan Carlos Guerrero

New California laws in 2025 allow new entertainment zones, cannabis cafes and offer more protection against deepfakes and artificial intelligence.

Artificial intelligence is having a greater impact on our lives and numerous new laws in California aim to make sure AI does not become a detriment.

They are just some of the hundreds of new laws taking effect Jan. 1, 2025.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

(SB 926) Deepfakes

Makes it a crime to create and distribute sexually explicit images of a real person that are artificially generated but made to appear authentic with the purpose of causing that person emotional distress.

(SB 981) Sexually Explicit Images

Requires that social media platforms establish a mechanism for users who are California residents to report sexually explicit images that were created or altered digitally but made to appear authentic. Social media companies must take down the content while they investigate the complaint.

(AB 1836 and 2602) Digital Likeness

Protects deceased actors and performers from having their image, likeness or voice reproduced without authorization by artificial intelligence. The law requires consent from the actor's estate before their likeness can be digitally replicated. A similar law (AB 2602) allows performers to back out of existing contracts if the language is vague enough to allow studios to digitally clone their image or voice in the future without expressed consent. New laws are taking effect to start off 2025. Things like artificial intelligence will see more regulation and minimum change will see a change.

ENTERTAINMENT

(SB969) Entertainment Zones

Allows local governments to create entertainment zones where bars and restaurants can sell alcoholic beverages that customers can drink on public streets and sidewalks. It replaces a law that only allowed outside vendors to sell alcohol at festivals and parades. A similar law that took effect in January of 2024 allowed San Francisco to set up entertainment zones to improve business at brick and mortar bars and restaurants.

(AB 1775) Cannabis Cafes

Cannabis dispensaries are about to get livelier. The law will allow licensed cannabis retailers to prepare and sell food and beverages at newly created cafes or lounges. That means customers can buy and consume cannabis at the business while they eat a meal or watch a live performance. California cannabis dispensaries are now one step closer to selling fresh food and drink after a new state law took effect Wednesday.

ONLINE

(SB 764) Child Vloggers

Parents or guardians who earn money by posting online videos that feature

continued on page 12

SANTA FE SPRINGS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Business Card Exchange Sunrise Breakfast

Sponsored by:

Holiday Inn
14299 Firestone Blvd.
La Mirada

**Wednesday
March 5, 2025**

8:00am - 9:30am

Start your day with a delicious breakfast while meeting like-minded professionals.

Chamber Members: \$20
Prospective Members: \$30

Register at sfschamber.com or call (562) 944-1616

SANTA FE SPRINGS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Business Card Exchange SUNRISE BREAKFAST

Sponsored by:

The Arc
Los Angeles & Orange Counties

**Wednesday
April 2, 2025**

8:00am - 9:30am

The Arc - Reagan Event Center
12049 Woodruff Ave.
Downey

Chamber Members: \$20 Prospective Members: \$30

Register at sfschamber.com or call (562) 944-1616

New California Laws continued from page 11

their children must set aside a percentage of their earnings in a trust account that benefits the minor. Parents will have to keep detailed logs of how much money they earned from each post and how many minutes their children appeared in the video. Children can sue parents who fail to follow the law.

(AB 1979) Doxxing

Allows victims of doxxing to sue their aggressors for up to \$30,000 in damages. Doxxing is when someone shares personal information like phone numbers, addresses or sensitive materials about someone else with the intent to harm or embarrass them. A survey by SafeHome.org found that 11 million Americans have been victims of doxxing.

HOUSING

(SB 611) Rent Checks

Prohibits landlord from charging tenants a fee if they pay their rent or security deposit by check. Starting in April, landlords will also have to provide renters with a written statement if they charge a security deposit higher than the standard.

(AB 2347) Evictions

Doubles the current deadline that tenants have to respond to an eviction notice to ten days. Under California law, if a tenant does not respond to an eviction notice within the required time they lose the case automatically. Advocates say this will give renters more time to seek legal advice.

(SB 450) Housing Developments

Makes it easier to convert single-family homes into duplexes and fourplexes by removing loopholes used by some local governments to slow down conversions. The new law requires local governments to respond to housing conversion applications within 60 days and bars local governments from denying an application to split up a lot based on the visual impact to the community.

CONSUMERS

(AB 2426) Digital Goods

Requires sellers of online products like digital movies, music, books or video games to disclose whether the consumer is purchasing unrestricted ownership or a revocable license. Sellers are not allowed to use the terms “buy” or “purchase” if the consumer is only receiving a license to access the digital good. It is not clear if the law applies to non-fungible tokens (NFTs).

(SB 1217) Pet Insurance

Requires pet insurance providers to be more transparent about whether their policy premiums are based on the age of the pet or where the pet lives, and if their policies exclude pre-existing conditions, hereditary disorders, congenital anomalies or chronic conditions.

(AB 2863) Automatic Renewals

Requires subscription services to get clear consent from a customer for automatic renewals and send annual reminders about the automatic renewal or continuous service. The law, which takes effect on July 1st also makes it easier to cancel a subscription either online or by telephone.

(AB 2017 and SB 1075) Overdraft Fees

Limits the overdraft fees that banks and credit unions can charge. The law prohibits financial institutions from charging a customer a fee for non-sufficient funds if the transaction was declined instantaneously. Starting in 2026, credit unions would be prohibited from charging an overdraft fee in excess of \$14.

(SB2202) Cleaning Fees

Requires short-term rental like Airbnb to disclose if there will be any additional fees or charges that will be added if the customer fails to perform certain cleaning tasks at the end of their stay. The law takes effect on July 1, 2025.

HEALTH

(AB 1817 and AB2771) Chemicals in Cosmetics

Bans the use of PFAS in clothing, textiles and cosmetics. PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances) can lead to liver damage, thyroid disease, reproductive problems and cancer. California would be the first state to impose a ban on PFAS, which are already prohibited in the European Union.

Another law taking effect in 2025 bans the manufacture or sale of cosmetic products with 11 other chemicals, including formaldehyde, mercury and methylene glycol.

(SB 540) Cannabis Health Warnings

Requires the state health department to create brochures or flyers that explain the risks associated with cannabis use. The documents must be displayed at cannabis retailers by March 1.

(SB 729) Infertility Treatments

Starting on July 1, 2025, health insurance plans are required to cover the diagnosis and treatment of infertility, including in vitro fertilization

continued on page 14



AI Empowerment Workshop Inspires Businesses to Embrace the Future

On December 10, the Santa Fe Springs Chamber of Commerce hosted the highly anticipated AI Empowerment Workshop, a transformative event designed to explore the rapidly evolving world of Artificial Intelligence.

Held in partnership with the SELACO Workforce Development Board, the workshop brought together business leaders, educators, and community members for an engaging session led by Lillian Lucero, who introduced the exciting collaboration with YOUTHINK Academy.

Attendees gained a comprehensive understanding of how AI is reshaping industries and everyday life. The workshop highlighted practical insights into how businesses and individuals can adapt and thrive in this AI-driven era. To connect with SELACO you can contact Lillian Lucero at (562) 484-5003 or email her at lillian.lucero@selaco.com.

SANTA FE SPRINGS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

New Member

Welcome!

4 Reasons why you should join us:

- Understand all that the Chamber has to offer: marketing, member programs, legislative affairs
- Meet the Chamber team and learn how they can work for you
- Make new business contacts with other new Chamber members
- Learn how the Chamber begins working for you immediately upon joining

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

10:30am-11:30am

Continental Breakfast

Chamber Office
12016 Telegraph Rd.
Suite 100
Santa Fe Springs

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED

We look forward to seeing you and appreciate your membership!

RSVP by Feb. 24, 2025
sfschamber.com

SANTA FE SPRINGS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Human Resources Roundtable

Presented by:
Partner Paul Fleck, Esq.
Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud and Romo

aa|rr
Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo
A Professional Law Corporation

January 14, 2025 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM	February 11, 2025 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM	March 11, 2025 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM
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- "AI" in the Workplace
- Handbook Updates & New Laws
- New Administration Issues for Employers

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The Road to Success: Insights from Visionary Entrepreneurs

On November 19, the Santa Fe Springs Chamber of Commerce hosted a remarkable event, The Road to Success: Insights from Visionary Entrepreneurs. The event brought together a packed room eager to hear the inspiring journeys of three trailblazing entrepreneurs who have achieved remarkable success in their respective industries.

The panel featured:

- Ivan Fernandez, founder of SPN Networks, who shared insights on growing a thriving IT company in a rapidly evolving tech landscape;
- Cathy White, the dynamic owner of The Lash Co. and Sugar & Spice Cafe, who detailed her unique approach to blending beauty and culinary innovation;
- Darryl Blunk, president and CEO of Apffels Coffee, who offered a behind-the-scenes look at leading one of the coffee industry's iconic brands to new heights.

Attendees had the opportunity to learn firsthand about the challenges, rewards, and pivotal moments that shaped each entrepreneur's journey. The panelists also fielded thoughtful questions from the audience, providing practical advice and inspiration to aspiring business leaders.

The energy in the room was palpable, with every seat filled by attendees eager to soak in the wealth of knowledge. The event not only highlighted the power of resilience and innovation but also underscored the value of community and mentorship in achieving success.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our panelists for sharing their stories and to everyone who attended, making this event a truly memorable experience.

Share Your Story

We are all experts at something. What is your something? Share that something with us at the chamber. Please consider telling us about your business and what you have to offer so we can share it. If you're looking to increase your business your storytelling is a good start. Telling your story effectively imparts a more human side to your business. Most sales people will admit it's the emotional side of the brain that drives purchasing, so storytelling gets your business where you want to be. Please contact the chamber office at (562) 944/1616 or email your story to mail@sfschamber.com

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New California Laws continued from page 12

(IVF). Religious employers are excluded from the requirement.

CRIME AND SAFETY

(AB 1394) Sexual Exploitation

Holds social media companies like Meta and Tik Tok liable for images of a person that appear on sexual exploitation videos or photos posted on their platforms. Victims of child sex trafficking can sue these companies for up to \$4 million if they knowingly facilitated the distribution of these images. The new law also requires social media platforms to establish a process for sex abuse victims to report videos or photos that include them. Companies have 36 hours to take the images down from their platforms.

(SB 1414) Sex Solicitation

Makes it a felony to solicit a minor under the age of 16 for sex. If the minor is 16 or 17, the crime can be upgraded to a felony if the teen is a victim of trafficking. The law penalizes anyone paying for sex with a minor even if the sexual act never occurred.

(SB 428) Restraining Orders

Allows employers to obtain a temporary restraining on behalf of an employee who has suffered harassment. The employee can choose not to be named in the restraining order petition. A court can deny the order if it would prohibit speech or activities protected by the constitution or labor law.

(SB 2342) Funding Victim Services

Creates the California Crime Victims Fund, helping to guarantee more consistent resources for survivors. It also directs fines from corporate white-collar crimes into this fund - giving victims extra support when they need it most.

(AB 1978) Sideshows & Street Racing

Governor Newsom signed several laws that impose stricter penalties for people participating in sideshows and street racing. The laws would make it easier for law enforcement to arrest sideshow participants and impound vehicles for illegal activities happening on streets, highways or parking lots.

Stopping sideshows and illegal street racing is the goal of four new California laws starting in 2025.

(AB 1960) Smash & Grab Robberies

Creates stiffer penalties for those involved in smash-and-grab robberies. If the crime caused more than \$50,000 in damage to a property, the court can impose an additional sentence of one year. Additional years can be added to a sentence if the property loss is higher.

New laws are taking effect to start off 2025, and some of those laws are aimed at cracking down on retail theft and other crimes. ABC7's Jory Rand has the details in the video above.

EMPLOYMENT

Minimum Wage

California's minimum wage will increase to \$16.50 per hour for all employers. The increase is tied to inflation. Fast food workers and healthcare facility workers have a higher minimum wage.

(AB 2123) Paid Family Leave

Allows an employee to take paid family leave without using accrued vacation time. Previously employers could require workers to take up to 2 weeks of vacation time before they could access California's Paid Family Leave Program. The law applies to employees that need to take leave from work to care for a sick family member, bond with a new minor child or because a military family member is on active duty.

(SB 988) Freelance Workers

Requires employers that hire freelance workers for professional services worth more than \$250 to provide a contract in writing that includes information on the work that will be performed and payment information. Employers must pay the freelance workers within the date specified in the contract or no later than 30 days after the work is completed.

(AB 1815) Hairstyles Discrimination

Expands protections against racial discrimination by widening the definition of race to include traits such as hairstyles and hair textures that are associated with certain races.

(SB 399) Mandatory Meetings

Bans employers from requiring that workers attend mandatory meetings concerning union organizing, otherwise known as 'captive audience' meetings. Also prohibits employers from requiring its workers attend meetings or participate in communications whose primary objective is to express the employer's stance on political matters or religious leanings. Employers who ignore the law can face a \$500 penalty per employee for each violation.

(SB 1100) Driver's License

Employers would no longer be allowed to require a driver's license in job postings unless the employer reasonably expects the job function to include driving and taking alternate transportation would be a detriment in travel time and cost to the employer.

EDUCATION

(AB 1780) Legacy Admissions

Bans legacy admissions for students applying to a private non-profit university in California. Universities like Stanford and USC would no longer be allowed to take into account whether a student applicant has ties to a donor or an alumnus. The law takes effect in September, so it does not apply to current applicants for the fall 2025 school year.

(AB 1821) Native Americans

Requires K-12 public schools in the state to teach about the treatment and perspectives of Native Americans during the Spanish colonization of California and the Gold Rush periods.

STATE SYMBOLS

Several laws have established official state symbols, including the Dungeness crab as the official state crustacean (AB 1797), the banana slug as the official state slug (AB 1859) and the shell of the black abalone as the official state seashell (AB 2504).

MISCELLANEOUS

(SB 1174) Voter ID Requirements

Prohibits local governments in California from requiring voters to present identification in order to vote. The law is in response to an ordinance passed in Huntington Beach that allowed the city to verify voter eligibility through IDs.

(AB 1810) Menstrual Products

Requires state prisons or jails in California to provide incarcerated people with free menstrual products without the inmate having to ask for them. Before this law, inmates had to ask for sanitary pads or tampons, which criminal justice advocates say allowed prison security to withhold menstrual products as a form of punishment and oppression.

(AB 3162) Octopus Farming

California becomes the second state to make it illegal to raise octopuses in farms with the intent to sell them for human consumption. The law also bars businesses from selling octopuses that came from octopus farms. The law still allows for the fishing of octopuses as long as it does not exceed the daily limit.

—CalChamber, January 2, 2025

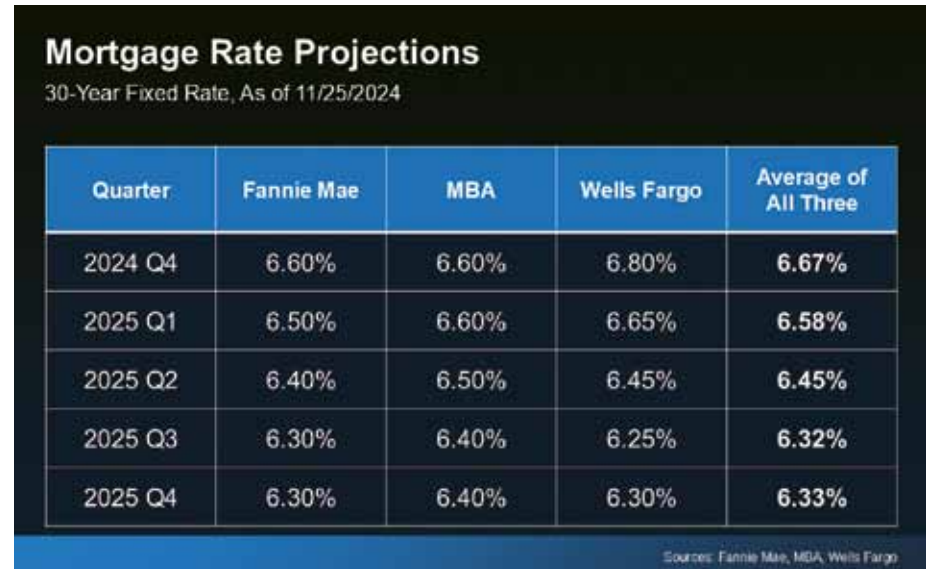
When Will Mortgage Rates Come Down?

One of the biggest questions on everyone's minds right now is: when will mortgage rates come down? After several years of rising rates and a lot of bouncing around in 2024, we're all eager for some relief.

While no one can project where rates will go with complete accuracy or the exact timing, experts offer some insight into what we might see going into next year. Here's what the latest forecasts show.

Mortgage Rates Are Expected To Ease and Stabilize in 2025

After a lot of volatility and uncertainty, the most updated forecasts suggest rates will start to stabilize over the next year, and should ease a bit compared to where they are right now (see graph below)



As Lawrence Yun, Chief Economist at the National Association of Realtors (NAR), says, "While mortgage rates remain elevated, they are expected to stabilize."

Key Factors That'll Impact the Future of Mortgage Rates

It's important to note that the timing and the pace of what happens with mortgage rates is one of the most challenging forecasts to make in the housing market. That's because these forecasts hinge on a few key factors all lining up. So don't be fooled, because while rates are expected to come down slightly, they're going to be a moving target. And the ups and downs of ongoing economic drivers will likely stick around. Here's a look at just a few of the things that'll influence where they go from here:

- **Inflation:** If inflation cools, rates could dip a bit more. On the flip side, if inflation rises or remains stubbornly high, rates may stay elevated longer.
- **Unemployment Rate:** The unemployment rate also plays a significant role in upcoming decisions by the Federal Reserve (the Fed). And while the Fed doesn't set mortgage rates, their actions do reflect what's happening in the greater economy, which can have an impact.
- **Government Policies:** With the next administration set to take office in January, fiscal and monetary policies could also affect how financial markets respond and where rates go from here.

Remember, these forecasts are based on the best information available right now. As new economic data comes out, experts will revise their projections accordingly. So, don't try to time the market based on these forecasts alone.

Instead, the best thing you can do is discover how much you qualify for and focus on what you can control right now. Work on improving your credit score, put away any extra cash for your down payment, and automate your savings.

All these things will help you reach your homeownership goals even faster.

Bottom Line

If you're planning to buy in 2025, let's connect! I can help you navigate the market and make the most of the opportunities ahead. Christine Perez, Certified Mortgage Advisor NMLS#1161920. Contact me at 626-833-0216 or email Christine.perez@nafinc.co

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Fifth Circuit Lifts the Nationwide Injunction on the Corporate Transparency Act BOI Reporting Requirements – FinCEN Extends Filing Deadline

On December 23, 2024, with the looming January 1, 2025, filing deadline just days away, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals lifted a nationwide injunction which had temporarily prohibited the enforcement of the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) and its implementing regulations (including the mandatory beneficial ownership information (BOI) reporting rule).

Now, while much of the country is busy with holiday festivities and end-of-year preparations, Reporting Companies that have not previously filed their BOI reports must scramble to comply with the newly reinstated deadline. Following the ruling, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) issued an alert notifying Reporting Companies that the BOI reporting requirement has been reinstated. However, for Reporting Companies formed prior to 2024, FinCEN extended the deadline to file BOI reports until January 13, 2025. (Additional deadline information can be found at <https://fincen.gov/boi>.)

Recent legal challenges to the constitutionality of the CTA had temporarily suspended enforcement of the CTA, leaving Reporting Companies without clear guidance on whether they would be required to comply with the CTA's BOI reporting rule as the January 1, 2025, deadline drew near.

Throughout 2024, courts across the Nation have heard legal challenges to the constitutionality of the CTA, coming to differing conclusions. For example, federal district courts in Virginia and Oregon held that the CTA is constitutional, while an Alabama district court in *National Small Business United v. Yellen*, No. 5:22-cv-01448 (N.D. Ala. Mar. 1, 2024), held that the CTA is unconstitutional and issued a ruling applicable only to the specific plaintiffs in that case.

On December 3, 2024, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas in *Texas Top Cop Shop, Inc. vs. Garland*, No. 4:24-CV-478 (E.D. Tex.

12/3/24), issued a preliminary injunction which prohibited the enforcement of the CTA and its implementing regulations (including the BOI reporting rule) finding that the CTA and its implementing regulations are likely unconstitutional.

However, despite the fact that the injunction was put in place by the District Court to protect businesses from being forced to comply with potentially unconstitutional and highly invasive reporting requirements until the Court could issue a final ruling on the CTA's constitutionality, the December 23 ruling by a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit removed the injunction's protection while not issuing a final determination on the constitutionality of the CTA. However, the three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit did find that "the government has made a strong showing that it is likely to succeed on the merits in defending CTA's constitutionality."

Key Developments

On December 3, 2024, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas issued a preliminary injunction barring enforcement of the CTA and BOI reporting requirements. Subsequently, on December 5, 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) filed an appeal of the court's order in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal. The DOJ had requested a hearing date of December 27, 2024, in advance of the looming January 1, 2025, BOI reporting deadline for Reporting Companies formed prior in 2023 or earlier. The Fifth Circuit obliged the DOJ's request, not only hearing the matter, but also lifting the injunction on December 23, 2024.

By lifting the injunction, the order by the Fifth Circuit reinstated the BOI reporting rule's enforceability just days before the January 1, 2025, BOI filing deadline, giving Reporting Companies very little time to timely file their BOI reports. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that many small and medium-sized businesses close down or oth-

erwise pause operations during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, making compliance particularly onerous. Potentially anticipating compliance issues, FinCEN extended the January deadline by nearly two weeks, to January 13, 2025.

Recommended Action

Despite the fact the injunction has been lifted, the Fifth Circuit has yet to rule on the underlying issue of the CTA's constitutionality. That said, regardless of whether the CTA is ultimately held to be unconstitutional, by lifting the injunction the court is forcing Reporting Companies to file BOI reports while the judicial process unfolds.

Reporting Companies should take note that failure to timely file a BOI report can result in significant penalties (including civil and criminal penalties), so it is critical that Reporting Companies satisfy their reporting obligations under the CTA.

Please refer to our December 29, 2023 Client Alert that includes a detailed explanation of the CTA BOI Report requirements, <https://www.aalrr.com/newsroom-alerts-4014>.

As always, the attorneys in AALRR's Corporate, Business, and Tax practice are here to help with guidance and expertise to support you and your business as you navigate the changing legal landscape surrounding the Corporate Transparency Act.

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December 26, 2024

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