

# Cal-Liope



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Page 2**  
Leadership Is A Learned Skill
- Page 3**  
EDD Director Farias and WSB Deputy Director Romero Visit the San Bernardino Americas Job Center
- Page 4**  
Empowering Leadership
- Page 5**  
Retiree Corner
- Page 5**  
Inventing Your Life
- Page 5**  
Legislative Update
- Page 6**  
2024 CWC Educational Conference Recap
- Page 7**  
A Reflection of My Career at the EDD
- Page 8-10**  
Around the State: District & Chapter News
- Page 11**  
Membership Form

## MESSAGE FROM THE CALIFORNIA WORKFORCE CONNECTION **PRESIDENT**

*By Dr. James Thomas, President, Silicon Valley member*

The Local Chapters and District Directors have begun developing inspirational upward mobility programs. Members becoming actively involved with educational training will help expand the expertise and forward thinking our organization can utilize. Your participation will display true leadership, relentless personal growth, an unwavering commitment to personal development, and your ambitious career path to success. Lead boldly from where you stand and inspire others to elevate their leadership skills through your powerful example. CWC believes in You!

CWC membership should take advantage of the Karl E. Bybee Educational Grant. The grant has eligibility criteria for members who are interested. If you have been a CWC member in good standing for 1 year, and recently completed training from an accredited training facility within a fiscal year, you can apply for reimbursement for some of the cost or all your costs up to \$750 in a fiscal year.

We hope our members read and enjoy the Cal-Liope Newsletter for activities and event from the Executive Board, District Directors, Chapter Presidents, and members. Some of the information provided is the President Message,



PRESIDENT DR. JAMES THOMAS

CWC Website, Retirement Message, Legislative Update, and Personal Message, and Activities throughout the state.

The website gives current information on upcoming events, Zoom presentations, new program developments, Chapter calendars, and District events. Visiting the website will keep you informed of events throughout the state.

## Modernizing EDD

*By Nancy Farias, Director, Employment Development Department*

It's a privilege to help support the thousands of dedicated public servants at EDD who deliver such valuable and innovative services for Californians. Our EDD team is taking action to improve our services, and, in turn, help make California a better place. I enjoyed meeting with many of you at the recent California Workforce Connection Educational Conference and sharing information about how EDD is modernizing.

Our modernization effort, called EDDNext, is completely transforming the EDD customer and employee experience. It includes [updating online](#)

[applications, contact centers, the claims process, policies, procedures, and forms](#), to make the EDD experience [easier and faster](#). It involves working with customer service experts, such as [Amazon Web Services](#) and [Salesforce](#), to ensure EDDNext is forward-thinking and embraces the best technology and practices.

Recently, we switched benefit debit card services to [Money Network](#) and now offer a new direct deposit option for our customers. We've also [streamlined benefit determinations](#), added customer [satisfaction surveys](#) after calls, added [text message updates](#) to State Disability Insurance claims, created a [new How to Apply](#)



NANCY FARIAS, DIRECTOR, EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

[for Unemployment guide](#), launched a [new shared customer portal](#) called myEDD, launched [dedicated phone lines](#) with EDD staff fluent in California's eight most commonly spoken languages, created new [multilingual resources pages](#), and much more.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

President  
DR. JAMES THOMAS

First Vice President  
VERLETTA "VAL" MOELLER

Second Vice President  
ARLENE BAUTISTA

Treasurer  
PHIL DWYER

Past President  
MELISSA LAURITZEN

Secretary  
NANETTE BOWMAN

Membership Coordinator  
LUCELY TUT

Cal-Liope Editor  
VIOLETA "VIOLET" VELAZQUEZ

District I Director  
KIM WESLEY

District II Director  
FRED RUIBAL

District III Director  
ANGEL URBINA

District IV Director  
RAY CABRERA



**Our association is dedicated to bringing education, opportunity, and innovation to all individuals with a common interest in workforce development**

## MODERNIZING EDD FROM PAGE 1

These improvements have the potential to help so many Californians. Over the last decade, we served more than 21 million Californians who filed 63 million unemployment, disability, and Paid Family Leave benefit claims. Last year alone, we paid out nearly \$16 billion in benefits, and as one of the nation's largest tax collection agencies, we collected \$105 billion in payroll taxes. Our goal is to keep making all of those interactions smoother, faster, and better for all Californians.

One of the recent EDDNext milestones was the introduction of [myEDD](#), a unified portal that streamlines access to our services. This platform simplifies the user experience by providing a single-entry point for EDD services. The new system has

been used over 30 million times.

We've also invested heavily in outreach to California's diverse communities. We've [expanded access options to our online unemployment application](#), which is now available in Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Armenian, Korean, and Tagalog, in addition to English and Spanish. This help customers access timely updates about their claims in their preferred language.

We are also [upgrading our contact centers](#) with advanced voice, chat, and self-service capabilities. These enhancements mean that customers can reach us through their preferred communication channels, making it easier to get the assistance they need when they need it. By consolidating

customer information and streamlining processes, we're empowering our employees to serve customers more efficiently.

In May 2024, we launched a pilot in Fresno in collaboration with Amazon Web Services and Salesforce. The new tools and systems are helping our employees provide high-quality service and we'll continue expanding this pilot to other offices this year.

I'm grateful for your ongoing support and partnership as we continue to modernize EDD. We'll continue to share updates on our progress through the [EDDNext](#) website and in our external newsletter, [Benefiting Californians](#), where we share how we are enhancing the EDD experience. Thanks again for a very engaging conference and I look forward to our continued work together!

## Leadership Is A Learned Skill

*By B.J. Sims, Web Administrator, Silicon Valley Member*

Have you heard the phrase when talking about someone that was admired that the person "was a born leader." Well, I am sure that some folks are born with natural attributes of

leadership, but I have also found leaders can come more often from challenging work, learned behaviors, acquired experiences, and a desire to help others.

In researching the topic of what makes an outstanding leader I found many articles

and books which quoted similar qualities of integrity, decisiveness, empathy, compassion, courage, commitment, and the ability to inspire others. Having said that all the leaders I was willing to follow had one

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

### CORRECTION NOTICE

*By Violeta (Violet) Velazquez, Executive Office Manager/Cal-Liope Editor*

Every effort is made to present valuable and correct information to our members. With that in mind, we are correcting several errors found in the May-June 2024 issue of *Cal-Liope*.

On page 2 in the "President's Message", Ken Gomez is titled as Division Chief. He's actually the Deputy Division Chief.

On page 5 in the "Directorate Panel Discussion at CWC State Conference" article, Cas Jones is identified as the WS Deputy Division Chief. The actual DDC is Cesar Valladares. Also, within the same article, the title "Deputy" Directors for each of the panel members was omitted. The correct titles are Nancy Farias, Director, Employment Development Department; Melissa Stone, Grecia Staton, and Javier Romero are Deputy Directors of their respective branches.

We apologize for the unintentional errors.

# EDD Director Farias and WSB Deputy Director Romero Visit the San Bernardino Americas Job Center

By Violeta Velazquez, Inland Empire Chapter, 2nd VP

On June 25, 2024, the San Bernardino (SB) Americas Job Center of California (AJCC) had the distinct honor of welcoming both the EDD Director, Nancy Farias, and WSB Deputy Director, Javier Romero to their facility. The San Bernardino management team, including the Deputy Division Chief, Carolyn Reyna, Southern Division Chief, Cheri Greenlee, and Chief of Staff, Michelle Stevenson warmly received the directors. The SB site manager, Andres Mendoza led a comprehensive tour of the facility, showcasing the impressive work being done.

Following the tour, the Director engaged in a meaningful discussion with both staff and management in the reserved conference room. The Director began by expressing gratitude for the team's hard work and their exceptional service to the community, especially during the challenges posed by the pandemic. Her opening remarks set a positive and appreciative tone for the meeting.

## Key Highlights from the Director's Address

**Acknowledgment of Hard Work:** The Director thanked the staff for their dedication and the outstanding services provided to the community during the pandemic. She recognized the challenges faced and the vital role the team played in supporting those in need.

**Introduction of EDDNext:** A significant focus of the



Director's address was on EDDNext, the department's modernization project. She emphasized that EDDNext is not just an IT upgrade but a comprehensive transformation of the department's customer and employee experience. The project aims to rethink how services are delivered, ensuring they are innovative, customer-focused, and adaptable to future challenges. The Director stated, "We cannot let the pandemic and what we learned from it go to waste." This underscores the importance of leveraging pandemic lessons to enhance policies and procedures.

**Interconnectedness of Branches:** The Director highlighted the importance

of breaking down silos within the department. She stressed that no branch could function effectively without the others, emphasizing the need for collaboration and interconnectedness across all branches.

**Trusting Instincts and Innovation:** Encouraging staff to trust their instincts, the Director urged them to avoid falling into the trap of doing things the same way if they are not effective. She advocated for innovative thinking and maintaining common sense in all decision-making processes.

**Employee Empowerment and Inclusivity:** The Director expressed a strong commitment to creating a culture of inclusivity

and empowerment for employees. She emphasized the importance of employees feeling good about their work environment, fostering a sense of belonging and engagement.

**The Importance of Asking "Why?":** Flexibility and understanding the reasons behind actions were highlighted as crucial. The Director encouraged everyone to ask "Why?" to ensure clarity and purpose in their work.

## A Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The visit from the Director and Deputy Director was an inspiring moment for the SB AJCC. Their vision for EDDNext and dedication to fostering a collaborative, inclusive, and innovative environment resonated with the team. The discussions highlighted the importance of adaptability and the need to continuously improve both customer and employee experiences.

As the department moves forward with EDDNext, the commitment to transforming services and breaking down barriers will be vital. The SB AJCC and Workforce Services Branch is committed in implementing these changes and contributing to the department's success.

This visit underscored the department's focus on growth and adaptation, ensuring that all branches work together seamlessly to achieve common goals. The Director's insights and leadership will undoubtedly guide the department towards a brighter, more efficient future.

*The SB AJCC and Workforce Services Branch is committed in implementing these changes and contributing to the department's success.*

# You Don't Need Permission to Add Value

By Violeta Velazquez, Inland Empire Chapter, 2nd VP/ Communications Chair

On May 29, 2024, the Inland Empire chapter of the California Workforce Connection (CWC) had the privilege of hosting Disability Insurance Branch (DIB) Deputy Director, Melissa Stone who delivered a compelling presentation at the Riverside DI office titled "You Don't Need Permission to Add Value." This leadership talk aimed to inspire a culture of accountability and initiative. The Deputy Director was excited to share her insights on how individuals can contribute meaningfully to their teams and organizations without waiting for explicit instructions or permission.



## You Don't Need Permission to Add Value

Melissa Stone  
Deputy Director  
Disability Insurance Branch



### The Goal: Cultivating a Culture of Accountability

The primary objective of the presentation was to encourage the development of a culture where team members hold themselves accountable, even when tasks are not solely their responsibility. She emphasized that accountability is key to driving organizational success

and fostering a supportive, dynamic work environment.

### The Process: See, Assess, Act

The Deputy Director outlined a straightforward approach for adding value, summarized in three steps:

**1. See an Opportunity:** Be observant and identify areas where improvements can be made, or value can be added.

**2. Assess the Situation:** Evaluate the context, considering factors such as potential benefits, risks, and alignment with organizational goals.

**3. Take Action:** Implement changes or propose solutions, even if they are small. Taking initiative helps drive progress and inspire others.

This framework empowers individuals to act proactively and make a positive impact in their sphere of influence.

### Key Insight: The Power of Individual Action

The Deputy Director stressed the importance of not waiting for "somebody" to do what "anybody" can do, especially when "everybody" knows what needs to be done, but "nobody" takes action. This powerful message highlights that change begins with individual actions and decisions.

**Creating Culture Change, One Step at a Time:** Culture change happens incrementally, through small actions that collectively lead to significant improvements. The Deputy Director encouraged attendees to focus on their sphere of influence, where they have the most control and can initiate change effectively.

**Empowerment Without Permission:** A key takeaway from the presentation is that employees don't need to ask permission to act within their sphere of influence. From their current positions, they can make a difference for customers and within their teams. Leadership exists at all levels, and anyone can take the initiative to lead by example.

**Everyday Leadership and Adding Value:** The Deputy Director concluded by emphasizing the concept of everyday leadership. Leadership is not confined to titles or positions; it is about taking ownership and contributing positively to the organization and community. She shared an inspiring video by Drew Dudley, illustrating how simple acts can add value and make a difference. The video can be accessed here: [Drew Dudley's Video on Adding Value](#)

The Deputy Director's presentation was a motivating call to action, encouraging all employees to take the initiative and add value without waiting for permission. By cultivating a culture of accountability and embracing individual leadership, we can create a more dynamic, successful, and empowering workplace. Together, we can make a significant impact and continue to support our organization's growth and success.

## LEADERSHIP IS A LEARNED SKILL

FROM PAGE 2

other skill set, the could move me to follow by effectively communicating their vision, what they wanted to accomplish, and a plan to get to the goal.

I also found many of those leaders were not born to the role but had to work hard to obtain the skills that made them leaders. Becoming a leader is something that needs to be earned by aspiring individuals, not granted with a promotion to the job. I have seen many individuals that held a title rank but not the respect of subordinate staff.

If you want to lead, you need to work at it and actively search for opportunities, hone your skills, take chances, and interact within your organization. Joining in is the beginning, but being part of a team, showing your commitment, and sharing

your vision, then others will look to you for leadership.

Being a leader means to walk the talk, hold yourself and others accountable, make decisions that consider others point of view with honesty and compassion. Listen to all sides of the argument. Rarely are opponents 100% right or wrong and you might hear something that rings true.

You can learn by doing, but if you want to learn a new skill set you can take a class, get a certificate, or join toastmaster. CWC has Bybee Grants that can reimburse you for specific training, but you must make time and effort to learn skills which you are not born with. For information on the Bybee Grant check out the CWC website: [www.californiaworkforceconnection.org/what-we-offer/education](http://www.californiaworkforceconnection.org/what-we-offer/education)

## RETIREE CORNER

By Nanette Bowman, Orange Empire Member

This is the tenth and final of a ten part series on research that shows you can help preserve your health and mobility as you age by adopting or continuing healthy habits and lifestyle choices. Read on to learn about common misconceptions related to aging and older adults. (Source: [www.nia.nih.gov/health](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health))

My blood pressure has lowered or returned to normal, so I can stop taking my medication. [High blood pressure](#) is a very common problem for older adults — especially those in their 80s and 90s — and can lead to serious health problems if not treated properly. If you take high blood pressure medicine and your blood pressure

goes down, it means the medicine and any lifestyle changes you have made are working. However, it is very important to continue your treatment and activities long-term. If you stop taking your medicine, your blood pressure could rise again, increasing your risk for health problems like stroke and kidney disease. [Talk with your doctor](#) about possibilities for safely changing or stopping your medication.

You are so welcome to send me ideas for articles or share what you are up to – you know my email: [cwcsecretary2023@gmail.com](mailto:cwcsecretary2023@gmail.com).

Stay well and stay in touch.



NANETTE BOWMAN

## INVENTING YOUR LIFE

### “Coping With a Loss”

By Rob Claudio, Orange Empire

I received some sad news several days ago when I was told a dear friend's mother, who I was very close to, had passed away unexpectedly. I took a long pause, and a million things went through my mind as I processed this. I immediately went back to when I first met this person in high school when I visited my friend's house after school. She was always friendly to me and a great cook, as she was the Registered Dietician for our school district. As a result of this great friendship I had developed, I also got to experience a new culinary world that I was unfamiliar with. I was very familiar at home with every Mexican dish you could think of due to my grandmother's touch in our kitchen. However, at my friend's house, I was introduced to unique things like tuna casserole and many different tasty Italian dishes, and one of the most memorable for me was Beef Wellington. We certainly did not have this variety of meals at my house, so I participated in a gastronomic experience well before it became what it is today.

At the helm of all this food that I was introduced to was Eileen, my dear friend Joey's mother. Throughout our friendship, we had countless sit-down dinners and so many other wonderful conversations about life, especially when in high school and what we would do after graduation. The years progressed, and my friend and his mom relocated to San Diego, where our friendship continued after I began attending San Diego State University. On the weekends, I would go to their home. As a typical starving college student, I cherished our time together because it would also provide me with another great meal that was very different from my cost-saving macaroni and cheese dinner that I had to endure for far too long. Many more memories were made with these great friends, as they were there when I graduated from college and were among the first to cheer me on. I was also present to celebrate great milestone birthday parties and weddings for her and Joey, bringing more new family members into the circle. I recall fondly that after a celebration gathering and all the guests were gone, Eileen and I usually sat at the kitchen table enjoying a final glass of wine as we contemplated what a great time we had just had. My friend Joey would be up in his room playing video games and tending to the family dogs, while I, on the other hand, enjoyed having an adult conversation and many laughs with Eileen. All these memories have been peppering my mind ever since I found out the news of her passing.

As I got the email advising me that articles for this newsletter were going to be due soon, I could only think of writing about how all of us have been touched in one way or another by beautiful people, along with having to deal with some of their losses as well. This brought back memories of my other childhood friend who lost his dad when we were both in seventh grade, and I recall going to the memorial services



ROB CLAUDIO

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



## Governor Newsom Revised State Budget

By Jane Van Loon, Legislative Chair, District II, East Bay Chapter

The Governor's revised budget proposal closes both this year's remaining \$27.6 billion budget shortfall and next year's projected \$28.4 billion deficit while preserving many key services that Californians rely on — including education, housing, health care, and food assistance.

In the years leading up to this May Revision, the Newsom Administration recognized the threats of an uncertain stock market and

federal tax deadline delays – setting aside \$38 billion in reserves that could be utilized for shortfalls. That has put California in a strong position to maintain fiscal stability.

### The key takeaways:

The Governor is solving two years of budget problems in a single budget, tightening the state's belt to get the budget back to normal after the tumultuous years of the COVID-19 pandemic. By addressing the shortfall for this budget year — and next year — the Governor is eliminating the 2024-25 deficit and eliminating a projected deficit for the 2025-26 budget

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



# California Workforce Connection Meets; Elects Officers for 2024-2025

By Nanette Bowman  
Orange Empire Chapter Member

President Dr. James Thomas called convention to order May 3, 2024, at 9 a.m. at the Ontario Airport Hotel, 700 N. Haven Ave, Ontario, California 91764. Secretary, Nanette Bowman, declared a quorum. The CWC officers were asked to stand and be recognized. The President then made a call for nominations.

Los Compadres President, Angel Urbina, came to the podium to present a Life Membership Award. Robert Woodford was honored as the recipient for his length of membership and service as the accountant for the organization.

Bybee, Education, and Membership committees are mandated to make an annual report to Convention. The Membership Chair, Annette Wiley, reported for membership. The Karl E. Bybee Chair, Arlene Bautista, reported for Bybee and Verletta Moeller reported for

Education on behalf of the chair, Dinah White, who was excused.

Convention recessed and reconvened at 4:00 p.m. The President announced officer nominations: President Dr. James Thomas, First Vice-President Verletta Moeller, Second Vice-President Arlene Bautista, Treasurer Phil Dwyer, Membership Coordinator Lucely Tut, and Bybee Board Member John Szeibert for the three-year term.

A Motion was made by V. Moeller and seconded by R. Cabrera to close nominations and seat officers by acclamation – Motion passed.

Districts announced Director election results: District I Kim Wesley, District II Fred Ruibal, District III Angel Urbina, and District IV Raymond Cabrera.

Past State Chapter President, Nanette Bowman, administered the oath of office.

Convention closed at 4:25 p.m.

year that is \$27.6 billion (after taking an early budget action) and \$28.4 billion respectively. Governor Newsom’s revised balanced state budget cuts one-time spending by \$19.1 billion and ongoing spending by \$13.7 billion through 2025-26. This includes a nearly 8% cut to state operations and a targeted elimination of 10,000 unfilled state positions, improving government efficiency and reducing non-

essential spending — without raising taxes on individuals or proposing state worker furloughs.

The Governor’s revised balanced budget sets the state up for continued economic success. California’s economy remains the 5th largest economy in the world.

**The Governor’s proposal will allow the State to achieve a positive operating reserve balance.**

## INVENTING YOUR LIFE FROM PAGE 5

while not quite knowing what to say to my friend, as I, too, was confused and overwhelmed by the whole ordeal. I know that so many of you out there have dealt with similar instances of losing loved ones either progressively or suddenly. Then, the grieving process comes in many forms, as there are other people on this earth, making things a bit more complicated. I have also found that there is no measurement of time that one could look up as a standard because there isn’t any when it comes to how long one grieves. What we cling to through all of this as we look for some silver lining that hasn’t yet appeared are countless memories etched in our minds and hearts that enable us to smile, if only briefly. This is also when our heart feels like it grows a few sizes to help us absorb the shock, along with a flood of beautiful memories attributed to those loving individuals. I always try to remember when we laughed so hard that we couldn’t breathe and how it felt like we had just returned from the gym due to our laughter workout. We will never stop remembering those who left

such an imprint on our lives.

As time marches on and we get to some new milestones, we pause and look up, hoping they are still here to help us celebrate another beautiful moment. Some of our losses occurred many years ago, and our hearts remind us frequently that the greatness of an individual is not marked by the number of years when they made such an impression on us. Whether it has been a month, a year, five years, or many more, those few folks carved a space in our hearts so deeply that we can never forget them. I hope the reunion will come on a date I have not determined. It will provide an excellent opportunity to see them again, and our hearts will feel abundantly full as we celebrate with each other as we once did.

*“We are all the pieces of what we remember. We hold in ourselves the hopes and fears of those who love us. As long as there is love and memory, there is no true loss.”*

– Cassandra Clare

Remember to follow the blog at: [inventingyourlife.blogspot.com](http://inventingyourlife.blogspot.com)

2025 CWC Annual Education Conference

**SAVE THE DATE**

MAY 02, 2025

You don't want to miss this one!

# A Reflection On My Career at the EDD

By *Violeta Velazquez*,  
CWC Executive Office Manager/  
Cal-Liope Editor,  
Inland Empire Chapter



VIOLETA VELAZQUEZ

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others.” This profound insight has been a guiding principle throughout my 20 plus year journey as a public servant at the Employment Development Department (EDD). My career path has not only allowed me to serve the people of California but also to discover my true self and passion for nurturing the growth of our internal stakeholders — our employees.

## A Journey of Service and Growth

My career at EDD began over two decades ago with the Unemployment Insurance Branch. Working in this capacity, I had the opportunity to assist countless individuals during times of uncertainty. Being a part of a system that provides support and relief to those in need was both a humbling and enriching experience. Each interaction taught me the importance of empathy, patience, and understanding, as I guided individuals through the complexities of unemployment insurance.

## Embracing Change and New Challenges

A year and a half ago, I embraced a new challenge by transferring to the Workforce Services Branch, where I currently serve as one of two Alternate Cluster Managers for the Riverside Cluster AJCC. This role has expanded my perspective and allowed me to contribute to workforce development initiatives that are crucial to our community’s economic growth. By helping individuals

find employment and develop new skills, I have witnessed

firsthand the transformative power of empowering others.

## Coaching and Mentorship: Passing the Torch

As a leader, I have had the privilege of coaching and mentoring many staff members under my tutelage. What I have enjoyed most is helping others find their path within the department and reach their goals. It is incredibly rewarding to see staff grow and make progress. Many of my mentees have advanced to specialty units, become trainers and managers, or ventured into positions outside the department or within other branches.

Succession planning and sharing my knowledge and wisdom have been among the most fulfilling aspects of my career. I take immense pride in having passed down the torch to so many amazing people who will ensure the continuous success of our organization. Service is not only extended to the people of California but also to our internal stakeholders and employees. They matter just as much, and we must recognize that they are our most valuable resource.

## Living Gandhi’s Wisdom

Throughout my career, Gandhi’s words have been a guiding light. By losing myself in the service of others, I have found a deeper sense of purpose and fulfillment. Whether it was helping someone navigate unemployment, assisting them

in finding a new career path, or mentoring future leaders, each act of service has strengthened my resolve to make a positive impact.

## Lessons Learned

### 1. Empathy is Key:

Understanding the struggles and challenges of others is essential in providing effective support and solutions. Listening with compassion has been a cornerstone of my approach.

### 2. Adaptability Leads to Growth:

Embracing change and new challenges has been crucial to my personal and professional development. Each new role has brought opportunities to learn and grow.

### 3. Collaboration Drives Success:

Working with dedicated colleagues and community partners has shown me the power of collaboration in achieving common goals. Together, we can create meaningful change.

### 4. Service Enriches the Soul:

The act of serving others has enriched my life in ways I never imagined. It has given me a sense of belonging and purpose that is truly rewarding.

### 5. Invest in People:

Empowering employees and investing in their growth leads to organizational success and a positive workplace culture.

## Looking Forward

As I continue my journey at EDD, I remain committed to serving others and making a difference in our community. Gandhi’s quote reminds us that through service, we can find not only our purpose but also the strength to inspire and uplift those around us.

In closing, I encourage everyone to embrace the spirit of service in their own lives. By dedicating ourselves to helping others, we can discover our true selves and create a more compassionate and supportive world.

**Are you retiring?  
LET CWC KNOW!**

Send that information to CWC to provide you with the retiree rate for CWC

[CONTACT US](#)

**Did you just get a promotion to management? LET CWC KNOW!**

Send your information to CWC to provide you with the manager rate for CWC

[CONTACT US](#)

**Did you just recruit a new member to CWC from the almost 4,000 new hires in Unemployment Insurance? LET CWC KNOW!**

Get that membership application mailed in and help your new friend get their [Members Only Login](#) on the CWC website

[CONTACT US](#)

## DISTRICT II NEWS

By Fred Ruibal

Summer has arrived and boy has it been hot here in SF Bay Area! Summer is probably the favorite time of year, especially for the kiddies... "no more teachers, not more books..!" You know where I am going with this! It is especially evident on the freeway going to work where the commute is not really that bad considering a lot of folks are doing the vacation thing and spending time away with their families, friends, or perhaps solo. But as fast as summer rolls on by, the march towards fall and winter continues, before we know it, we will be complaining about how cold it is!

District II began the 3rd quarter with continuing event planning as we try to keep our members informed with the latest and greatest of workforce developments and happenings. Motivation is of course always a challenge to get the members engaged, but the district keeps pressing on to keep within the goals and objectives of CWC.

As of this writing, the district will be having their annual installation of new officers on July 20, 2024. It will take place at Georgio's Italian Restaurant, a venue that has served us well with their accommodations and comfortable environment. Of course, the food is beyond exceptional. The pizza is to die for! We will be having a speaker as well. The chapters of District II, East Bay and Silicon Valley have always gotten together to install their new members together as a district. These gatherings are great opportunities for networking and enjoying good company with fellow members. We will report on it in more detail in the next issue.

That is all for now my fellow CWC members! Hope to see some of you folks soon!



## ORANGE EMPIRE CHAPTER

By Nanette Bowman, Orange Empire Chapter

WS 042 Orange County Individual Employee Performance, EPR Maria Crespo

WS 042 Orange County Veteran's: Luis Acosta, Hieu Nguyen, Joshua Noonan, and Luis Rodriguez

DI 222 Chino Hills, Individual Customer Service, Chelsea Ponce, DIPR

DE 222 Group Employee Performance DIPM I's: Haydee Avila-Hernandez, Leticia DelaTorre, Brenda Galiano, Nelson Lewes, and Sheree Speed

DI 219, Individual Employee Performance DIPR's: Michael Toscano, Eduardo Arciga, and Sandy Huynh

UI 019 Pacific Center, Individual Employee Performance: Nicole Lopez, EPR

UI 019 Group Customer Service EPR's: Hsiu Hsin Sun, David Kim, Kyong Park, and Hye Chung

UI 017 Anaheim Group Employee Performance Disaster Response Team EPR's: Peter Emelue, Laura Esqueda, Fermin Garza, Andrew Khuu, and Carlos Reyes

UI 017 Group Employee Performance Language Translation

Team-EPR'S: Jacklyn Shih, Winna Hui, Phoebus Hon, Christi Trinh, and Kathy Tran

Congratulations to each nominee. Thank you for your dedication to serving the people of California in 2023. We also thank the nominators who took the time to recognize their staff. Orange Empire trophies have been delivered to respective office managers. Now is the time to start recording the accomplishments for 2024 using the same criteria. Remember, anyone can make a nomination.



## PUERTO DEL SOL CHAPTER

### COME SPEND THE 20TH ANNUAL BEACH PICNIC

By Maritza Marroquin-Sanders, President,  
and the Puerto Del Sol Chapter Picnic Planning Committee

Join us for the 20th Annual Puerto Del Sol [California Workforce Connection](#) Picnic at Mission Bay in San Diego!

We'll spend Saturday, August 17th together from 11am-2 pm.

There will be plenty of parking and we'll be at the De Anza Cove area of Mission Bay.

Come say hello to friends and community, listen to great music, eat snow cones and play some delightful games, which are always optional. Enjoy the picnic your way.

Did we mention there will be tacos?

And, hot dogs and hamburgers, and all the fix-ins.

Come enjoy some sunshine

with us! To register to attend the picnic, [click here](#) to view the picnic registration details. Want to learn more about [California Workforce Connection](#) and how to become a member? Visit: [California Workforce Connection – Join the California Workforce Connection](#)



## CHAT GPT AND COVER LETTERS WORKSHOP RECAP

By R.Eusey and M.Marroquin-Sanders

The Puerto del Sol chapter of the California Workforce Connection recently hosted a transformative workshop on leveraging AI for cover letter writing. The event, led by seasoned instructor Rebecca Eusey, drew a diverse group of over 15 state workers and guests keen to harness the power of technology in their job application strategies for themselves and the clients they serve.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



MORE CHAPTER NEWS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Rebecca Eusey, renowned for her expertise in career coaching derived from over 10 years of her own private Veteran-centric coaching business and previous role with EDD, guided participants through the intricacies of using ChatGPT to tailor compelling cover letters. Attendees learned firsthand how to utilize AI tools effectively to customize content, highlight key skills, and resonate with potential employers. The session was not just a theoretical exploration but a practical dive into real-world applications, providing attendees with actionable insights to enhance their application packages, and increase chances of being selected for an interview.

The workshop, organized by the Puerto del Sol chapter, exemplified the California Workforce Connection's commitment to empowering its members with cutting-edge resources. Participants left inspired and equipped with newfound knowledge, ready to help clients and themselves navigate the competitive job market with confidence and competence. As we look forward to future events, this workshop stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation in advancing career development within our community. Special thanks to Jennifer Lucy for tech support. Attendee and longtime PDS member Rosario Franco of Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) said, "You always bring us with you to the cutting edge of technology. Thank you." Special thanks to all our guests, including leadership of CWC from District 4 Director Ray Cabrera, EDD's Region C Deputy Division Chief, Annie Taamilo, Southern Division Training Manager Jennifer Oliva and our President, Dr. James Thomas for joining us.

## 2024-25 BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED

by Jennifer Lucy, Puerto Del Sol Chapter Member

Please join me in welcoming the new board members of the Puerto Del Sol Chapter (PDS) of the California Workforce Connection (CWC): Our new chapter President, Maritza Marroquin-Sanders, joined the Employment Development Department (EDD) Workforce Services Branch (WSB) in 2020, and currently serves as a Business Services Representative and Division Trainer. Prior to state service, Maritza worked in corporate marketing, behavioral health and training. Maritza values innovation and joined the PDS CWC during the pandemic to help the Chapter pivot to a virtual environment, support change management and foster connection. As President, Maritza says "I look forward to nurturing synergistic connections, community-building and education."

Lynn Lam, our Treasurer, has worked with the EDD for 16 years. In her time at the EDD, she had worked at the Adjudication Center as an Adjudicator. She was part of the Legislative Referral team, and she uses her multilingual abilities to assist with Vietnamese Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Special Claims. Lynn is currently working with a new department platform called [EDDNext](#) as an Analyst. As Treasurer, Lynn would like to bring health and wellness ideas to the PDS CWC members and nurture networking within the CWC. Lynn's hobbies include cooking, hiking, and participating in charitable endeavors.



PUERTO DEL SOL CHAPTER BOARD 2024-2025; FROM TOP LEFT: LYNN LAM, ALEXA NAVARRO; BOTTOM MIDDLE: MARITZA MARROQUIN-SANDERS

Alexa Navarro, the PDS Secretary, was born and raised in San Diego. Alexa has worked with the EDD for over four years. She began working with the Workforce Services Branch in Chula Vista where she was the Business Services Representative and the team leader for Re-employment Services & Eligibility Assessment (RESEA). In May 2022, Alexa took on a new job as an Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA) for the EDD Unemployment Insurance Support Division (UISD) in Sacramento. She joined the CWC to enrich her state experience by networking with fellow members. Alexa says, "I greatly look forward to this upcoming year with the CWC PDS chapter, and I hope to get to know everyone better through more events and group activities. I am excited to fulfill my role as part of the PDS board."

Join the Puerto Del Sol Chapter or a chapter near you. Visit the [California Workforce Connection](#) to learn more about upcoming events. Already a member? Check out the new CWC t-shirts today, please [click here](#) for more information.



## COBWEBS, AND SPIDERS AND FLIES, OH MY! BOUCHER HILL HIKE WITH THE PUERTO DEL SOL (PDS) CHAPTER

By Maritza Marroquin-Sanders, President and Ken Underwood, Member

The Puerto Del Sol Chapter (PDS) of California Workforce Connection (CWC) hosted a hike to Boucher Hill Lookout Fire Tower at the Palomar Mountain State Park on June 29, 2024. Although park entry is \$10, with the [California State Parks Library Pass](#) vehicle day-use admission is free. Our meeting point was the Silvercrest Picnic area at 7:30 am. The Silvercrest Picnic area is located 5,240 feet above sea level. We chose this location to grab some sunshine and nature, and encourage community-building opportunities to PDS Chapter members and guests.

"You can be creative and bring people together through Chapter events to foster fellowship and education," said BJ Sims,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

MORE CHAPTER NEWS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

CWC State Website Administrator, Marketing Chair and former Chapter President of Silicon Valley.

Our intention was to start at the [Boucher Hill Loop](#) trailhead, which is located off the paved road leading to the Boucher Hill Lookout Fire Tower. Boucher is pronounced /book-er/. Instead of the Boucher Hill Loop, we found the [Scott's Cabin Loop](#) Trail which is located right off the Silvercrest Picnic area. Since it was a short loop, we opted to include the Cedar Trail which is .6 miles to Doan Pond. This trail was definitely a moderate level trail with inclines and lots of branches, vines, and brush along the way. Chirps and tweets, subtle wisps of breeze, and the more than occasional encounter with winged critters made it a very engaging trek. We donned long sleeves and backpacks, found sticks to gently sweep away spider webs as we came across them. "We're getting a pretty good arm workout shoo-Ing away little flies but the air is incredible and we're getting our mind off screens," noted Ken Underwood.

We made our way down to Doan Pond and it was an easy place to sit and catch a quick snack and water break. The pond glimmered with a dazzling reflection of sunshine and tall grasses framed its surroundings. We had a chance to briefly chat about the upcoming 20th Annual PDS Chapter Beach Picnic and ideas for prospective events for the upcoming year.

We made our way back to the Silvercrest Picnic area and did not quite feel complete without visiting our intended destination. We drove up to the Boucher Hill Fire Lookout Tower which has a small parking lot to accommodate a few vehicles. The incredible lookout has a substantial panoramic vista of the gorgeous County of San Diego including sights of the Pacific Ocean off on the horizon. To our delight, we heard a voice calling out to us. After a few seconds of locating what direction, the voice was coming from, we looked up. We were met by Patty Kast, Forest Fire Lookout Association volunteer, who called out to us from 30 feet above. We looked up at her smiling face peering down from the Fire Lookout Tower inviting us to come have a look. So up we went!

Former pilot and Traffic Control Officer with the FAA for nearly thirty years, Patty shared about her work now with the Forest Fire Lookout Association at the Boucher Hill Lookout Fire Tower. She recommends to bring your binoculars as this is the busiest tower of its kind in the United States. She gave us a generous tour of the 15x15 foot octagonal cab structure which was built in 1948. [Friends of the Palomar State Mountain](#) report that the first tower was built in 1921, replaced in 1934, later replaced by the current tower built in 1948. According to the [Forest Fire Lookout Association, Inc. website](#), the tower is an excellent example of the CDF 809R design on a 30-foot enclosed, K-brace tower.

A word about the bugs. Patty suggested a head net for hiking during the June and July months in the Palomar Mountain State Park trails, as the warm weather does seem to foster a lively habitat for swarms of bugs. As more visitors made their way into the tower for an interpretive experience like ours, Patty left us with a sincere, "glad you made us part of your day. Bring your friends."



Owned and operated by [CalTech](#), the Palomar Observatory is just a short ten-minute drive away. We extended our Palomar Mountain State Park visit and had the good fortune to visit with a docent, also a current CalTech student, who shared fascinating information while visitors waited for a live tour. Did you know that the Hale Telescope does not use human eyes for seeing? We learned that Palomar Observatory is an active research facility whose data is collected online and shared worldwide with other astronomers. Here is a link to the [audio guide](#).

We also learned about the Infinity Mirror, which is covered in a layer of aluminum reflectivity which illuminates the mirror. The mirror is treated every two years which takes about two weeks to complete. We also learned that the mirror weighs approximately 14.5 tons. How heavy is that? From the website, [Weight of Stuff](#), one comparison is the weight of two Tyrannosaurus Rex, which apparently were estimated to weigh about 7 - 8 tons each. We learned one more fun fact about the Palomar Observatory. When the mirror was being built, the engineers had the foresight to ask about flooding and weather patterns. The Infinity Mirror took approximately 9 months to build and apparently one of the 100-year floods known to the area happened to occur during its construction. The mirror had been mounted just above the flood line.

The Puerto Del Sol Chapter will continue to serve its members and guests with engaging quarterly events encouraging innovation, education and opportunity. To join us for the upcoming 20th Annual Puerto Del Sol Chapter Beach Picnic, which will be held on Saturday, August 17, from 11 am- 2 pm. at the De Anza Cove in Mission Bay, San Diego, [click here to register](#). Want to learn more about California Workforce Connection and how to become a member? Visit: [California Workforce Connection – Join the California Workforce Connection](#).

**Membership Application**

New    Update    Renewal    Cancellation

Date:

Mail application and payments to: **CWC Membership Coordinator**, P.O. Box 7858, Oxnard, CA 93031  
or email application to [cwcworkforceconnection@gmail.com](mailto:cwcworkforceconnection@gmail.com) (mail payment, if applicable)

*Full Name:	First	Last		
*Local Chapter:	Select chapter you want to join	Telephone:		
*Personal email:				
*Address:				
*Employer:		*Location:		
*Job Title:		ARU#		*Bargaining Unit #:

*Type of Member	Annual Dues	*Payment Option
<input type="radio"/> Employment Development Department (EDD) Employee (Bargaining Unit 1 or 4)**	\$48.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Deduction (\$4.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check *SSN:
<input type="radio"/> EDD Supervisor/Exempt Employee**+	\$0.00	*SSN:
<input type="radio"/> Other State Employee (Non-EDD)** <i>Refer to your Bargaining Unit Contract for possible reimbursement</i>	\$98.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Deduction (\$8.17) <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check *SSN:
<input type="radio"/> Partner (Non-EDD)	\$98.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check
<input type="radio"/> EDD Student/Youth Assistant**	\$36.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Automatic Deduction (\$3.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check *SSN:
<input type="radio"/> Retiree	\$36.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check

I recognize that the processing of this form/payment may take 1-3 months. If I have selected the **Automatic Deduction** option, I hereby authorize the State Controller's Office (SCO) to automatically deduct from my salary each month the amount listed above and transmit, as designated, an amount for membership dues to the CWC; I understand that processing may take 2-3 pay periods. If I have selected the **cash or check** option, I hereby agree to be sent annual dues renewal invoices (**make check payable to: CWC**). I agree to provide my full social security number, which will be kept confidential. I certify that I am now a member of the CWC and allow the organization to establish, change, and/or cancel my deduction, as applicable. I understand that this authorization will remain in effect until I submit a written request to the CWC Membership Coordinator to terminate my membership and cancel any deduction, as appropriate. I also understand that the CWC organization does not issue refunds for unused dues or the months taken for processing.

\*Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ \*Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Recruiter (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

\* Required

\*\* If you do not wish to provide your Social Security Number (SSN), then you must pay the full membership dues for that type of member by cash or check.

+ For this membership type, if you do not wish to supply the SSN, then the amount due is \$98.00.