

December 21, 2020

Dear Gonzales Community:

Let me start by wishing all of You, Your Families and Loved Ones a Safe, Happy and Warm Holiday! I realize that this has been a challenging year as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the fires and heatwave that we experienced several months ago, but in spite of all this adversity, our Community's spirit, generosity, perseverance, and resiliency exhibited every day has and is amazing. Simply stated, this is what makes our Community Great and a Very Special Place: *The Gonzales Way of Love, Care, & Connect.*

**COVID-19 Pandemic:** As we come to the end of 2020, we know that many in our community are struggling and as a result we have been working very hard with many amazing partners to provide much needed assistance to our community. A huge thanks to the Food Bank of Monterey County and our own Cypress Church, the Community Church Food Pantry, and St. Theodore Catholic Church who have been providing and supporting food distribution in our community for many months. I would like to provide a special acknowledgment and heartfelt thanks to the County Health Department and County of Monterey who have worked in close collaboration with all the cities in the county as we address the challenges of the pandemic. It has truly been a team effort.

On our direct assistance programs, we have provided over \$200,000 in direct rental and expenses assistance to many in our community and approximately \$300,000 in direct aid to our small businesses. If you are in need or aware of anyone in need of rental and/or business assistance do not hesitate to give us a call at 831-675-5000.

Big Props to our Recreation staff who worked tirelessly to stand up and operate a safe Kid Power program that provided much needed educational programming to over 40 elementary youth.

To our amazing first responders and health care workers, Thank You, Thank You, Thank You. Many times, we take you for granted, but what you have done to keep us safe is nothing short of remarkable. Yes, you truly are our Heroes!

As we have seen, we are experiencing a significant increase in our COVID numbers so it is more important than ever to remain vigilant and follow all the guidelines: ***wear your face covering, maintain social distancing and more importantly please resist the desire to travel and gather outside of your immediate family.*** I understand that the holidays are a very special time of year and we all want to get together with family and loved ones, but the COVID-19 virus is very real, and it is seriously impacting our community and straining the capacity of our hospitals. With the vaccine on its way, it is not the time to let down our guard. On the contrary, now more than ever we need to follow all the guidelines and recommendations.

**Measure X:** Thank you for supporting the passage of Measure X, *Gonzales Enhanced Quality of Life Temporary Tax Measure*, which will provide money for a variety of potential projects, programs and general purposes, including the development and construction of the Community Center Complex as the top priority project. This very exciting project will be located on Gabilan Court next to the Fairview Middle School Gym. Be on the lookout for opportunities to participate in early 2021. The goal is to start construction of the Community Center in 2022.

**Housing and the New Growth Area:** As we all know, we need more local housing opportunities and I am pleased to report that we are working diligently on this effort. If all goes well in 2021, development will begin in 2022. Similar to the work on the Community Center, there will be a lot of opportunities to participate in early 2021 to share your thoughts and ideas on the future of our town.

**2021**

In addition to the Community Center and new Growth Area, there are many other exciting things coming to our community. From the work that our Gonzales Unified School District will do to build a new elementary school and improve the high school, there are improvements planned for our parks, streets and other critical infrastructure.

In addition, when safe to do so again, our recreation and youth programming will come back stronger than ever and our Gonzales Youth Council is working hard to improve mental health programming and move the Teen Innovation Center forward. Work continues on improving our broadband connectivity and also our public safety departments will be looking to increase their engagement with our community.

***As 2020 comes to an end, on behalf of all City Staff I would Like to Extend our Warmest Thoughts and Wish You A Safe, Happy, and Warm Holiday Season!***

Warm Regards,



Rene Mendez,  
City Manager  
City of Gonzales

**GONZALES DOWNTOWN**

