



COUNTY OF MONTEREY  
**CAO Weekly Report**

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**SPECIALREPORT**



*Alejandro Chavez celebrates the grand opening of the Soledad Visitors Center with fellow councilmembers and others. Pictured left to right are Soledad City Manager Adela Gonzalez, Police Chief Eric Sills, Chavez, Congressman Sam Farr, Soledad Mayor Fred Ledesma, Senator Barbara Boxer, Councilmember Pat Stephens and Karen Beppler-Dorn, Pinnacles Park Superintendent.*

**County Notes**

- > Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup> is Monterey County Clean-Up Day. There are many ways to be involved. Find out about activities and clean up projects [here](#).

## **Employee Spotlight: Alejandro Chavez Brings Personal Experience to Public Service**

Alejandro Chavez has been the Chief of Staff for Supervisor Fernando Armenta for more than 15 years, but did you know he has carved out his own path in politics and public service? Alejandro tells us about his life in public service in this Employee Spotlight article.

Most people within the County think of me simply as the Chief of Staff for Supervisor Armenta and are quite surprised when they find out in a meeting they attend or at an event they participate in that I am a councilmember for the City of Soledad.

I don't normally advertise myself as an elected official for a number of reasons including my position as a Chief of Staff. I truly believe that I am a public servant and I take that role very seriously.



*Alejandro Chavez.*

### **Choosing Politics**

I first contemplated running for office back in 1996, however the timing wasn't right. I have run twice on failed attempts for office and on one occasion I lost by just one vote. I was elected to the City Council in Soledad in 2010.

I don't believe I would consider my position as a Councilmember a career but more a community volunteer with a heavy load to carry in moving forward a plan and an agenda to help our community of Soledad be a better place for the families that live there. There are some benefits to being a councilmember that have complemented my work as a Chief of Staff, such as being exposed to understanding the development and implementation of policy and how budgets work.

### **Lifelong Interest**

I've been interested in politics since I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I grew up working in the fields beginning at age eight working during the summers until the age of 17. I then began working in canneries while attending community college before transferring to UC

Santa Cruz.

I have been involved in politics since the age of 17 and have assisted in campaign races all over the State of California, but in particular on the Central Coast. I have dedicated a number of years to public service as a parks commissioner and on several non-profit boards in addition to my service as a City Councilmember in Soledad for the past 5½ years.

### **The Role of Councilmember**

I attend meetings as a Councilmember, attend meetings as a committee member (Budget Review, Parks and Recreation, Revolving Loan Fund) and represent the City of Soledad in a number of assignments such as being its representative at the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC). I attend workshops, events, review agendas, meet with constituents and most importantly, I look at making sound decisions to determine the future of our city.

I was unanimously appointed as Mayor Pro Tem in 2011 after being on the council for less than a year and have been reappointed each year since then. It is a real honor to have that bestowed upon me by the rest of my colleagues. I represent Soledad at functions and events or in our council meetings when the Mayor is unavailable.

## The Future

I really can't say what the future holds for me in terms of politics. Years ago, I saw this as my future, but with children now and a number of commitments that I have personally, it is a bit difficult to see myself moving forward in this direction.

However, I will always believe in the power of local representation. I really believe that our local 'electeds' can do more than those at the state and federal level. The direct impact we have is tremendous. For example, our City of Soledad has seen a tremendous growth in visitors ever since the city adopted the "Gateway to the Pinnacles" brand and thousands of people from around the world have come to our Visitor's Center that we put together last year. Our community is moving forward in this direction along with making certain that we are pushing for more youth centered activities. The impact is far reaching and I truly believe in being a local public servant.

