In This Edition:

- Dial up the new bilingual county greeting
- Libraries honored for youth services
- Public Health Week marked with positive change

Greta Arevalo, Elections Program Manager, is the new ‘voice’ of Monterey County.

New Bilingual Greeting Welcomes County Callers

Dial the main county phone line, 755-5000, and you will hear a new voice and new service for Spanish-speaking callers.

Monterey County now has a greeting on the main line giving both English and Spanish language options, helping many customers who previously could not
or had difficulty navigating the County phone tree. The new ‘voice’ of Monterey County you hear in the new system is Elections Program Manager Greta Arevalo.

“It’s my pleasure to be the welcoming voice of Monterey County and help us reach a higher level of customer service for our Spanish-speaking community,” she says.

Updating the phone tree was a collaborative effort involving staff across several departments and with the support of County leadership. The idea grew from a conversation between The Civil Rights Office and Elections Department during a Title VI of the Civil Rights Act implementation meeting.

“Providing services to our residents in the language that they speak is one-third of the components of Title VI compliance,” explains Civil Rights Officer Juan Rodriguez.

Monterey County has a population of more than 435,000 people, 54% of whom speak a language other than English at home and 58% of the total population are Hispanic or Latino according to the US Census. Given those demographics, a bilingual phone tree as part of a baseline service component was needed. The change also assists departments in complying with federal laws which require bilingual services.

“The constant application and practice of the laws that govern elections gives our Department’s employees a unique awareness of the importance and value of compliance with accessibility and inclusiveness,” explains Registrar of Voters Claudio Valenzuela. “We are very pleased with our collaboration with the Civil Rights Office on this project.”

Congratulations to the team which launched the new phone tree service: Greta Arevalo, voice and Spanish translation, Elections; Richard Axton, Telecommunications Specialist, ITD; Victor Sosa, Spanish translation, Natividad Medical Center; Colleen Beye, Project Coordinator, Civil Rights Office.

Libraries Win Excellence in Education Award

The Monterey County Free Libraries (MCFL) overall efforts to help local youth has been singled out to receive the Monterey County School Boards Association’s Excellence in Education Award.

This award acknowledges MCFL’s work in providing a wide variety of high-quality programs and services for our local youth to help them read, find success in school and achieve their full potential.

Monterey County Administrative Office
MCFL staff members Orquidea Olvera, Be Astengo and Jayanti Addleman were on hand to receive the award and were joined by representatives of the Foundation for Monterey County Free Libraries and the County of Monterey.

“We are so humbled and honored to receive the award,” says Jayanti Addleman, Library Director. “We serve some of our most at-risk youth as well as their parents; our main goal is to help everyone in the county be the best they can be. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of all of MCFL’s staff who stretch our very limited resources to take innovative and programs like the Homework Centers, Summer Reading and Culture Club, Preschool STEM classes, Wi-Fi hotspot and our telescope checkout programs all around the county.”

The Excellence in Education Award is given to entities which have a transformative and significant impact on students’ quality of life and address unmet, county-wide needs.

---

**Public Health Week Marks Work, Healthy Changes**

The Health Department has been putting its best foot forward this week, celebrating Public Health Week and showcasing its contributions to making all of our lives both healthier and safer.

The weeklong effort wraps up today (Friday, April 6th) with an event in the City of Gonzales, which is rolling out a draft Health and Wellbeing Element of its General Plan.
“This Health Element is a great example of this year’s National Public Health Week theme, ‘Working Together for a safe, healthy and thriving Monterey County,’” said Elsa Jimenez, Monterey County Director of Health. “It is only fitting that we should celebrate Gonzales moving towards a healthier, safer and more prosperous place for all.”

The Department got a jump on Health Week with a newspaper insert last week, highlighting its many bureaus and their work in the community. Programs that safeguard our health were also prominently featured on the department’s website this week as well.