

PLEASANTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Jacqueline Brown, Workday

Billy Buckley, ENT Networks, Inc.

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Shelley Despotakis, Chicago Title Company

Shareef Mahdavi, Merchant Advocate

Manny Peregrina, VIP Audio Visual

Lori Strazdas, The Clorox Company

David Wong, David Wong Chiropractic

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Joe Testa,
Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department

David Wong, David Wong Chiropractic

Chamber Staff

President/CEO
James Cooper

Membership Director
TBD

Business Operations Manager
Yianna Theodorou

Events & Communications Coordinator
Kate D'Or

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The positions and views advocated here are solely the responsibility of the Chamber.

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It's Been a Pleasure

My year as the Chair of the Chamber Board is winding down, and I commonly get asked, "Shawn, did you enjoy your year as Chair?"

Earlier in the year my response would have been, "Wow, this is a bigger time commitment than I anticipated!"

In fact, when I was asked what I do for a living, my response was, "Well, my day job is Chair of the Pleasanton Chamber, but I also have a side job as a Financial Advisor with Morgan Stanley."

However, as I now reflect on this past year serving as the Chamber of Commerce Board Chair, I realize it has been one of the best and most rewarding experiences of my professional career. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the many people who helped me tremendously during my time as Chair:

Chamber Staff — it all starts with our hard-working crew and the tremendous support I received from our CEO James Cooper, Yianna Theodorou, Kate D'Or, and Jeanette Schaub. Thank you all!

Board of Directors — I want to express my sincere gratitude for the dedication and countless hours that the Chamber Board put in this past year:

Bob Rossi (Sunshine Saloon), Jill Buck (Go Green Initiative), Ken Norvell (CMIT Solutions), Jacqueline Brown (Workday), Geno Ashley (Hoge Fenton), Billy Buckley (ENT Networks), Seema Chawla (TekValley Corp), Shelley Despotakis (Chicago Title), Shareef Mahdavi (Merchant Advocate), Manny Peregrina (VIP Audio Visual

Co.), Lori Strazdas (Clorox), Dr. David Wong (Chiropractic), Bill Wheeler (Black Tie Transportation), my past Treasurer, Steve Baker and our incoming 2025 Board Chair, Arne Olson!

Ambassadors — too many to name, but they all selflessly commit their time to support our Chamber and its members. They are the glue that holds everything together and they are AWESOME! I hope to, one day in the future, be an Ambassador.

Members — it has been a pleasure getting to know so many of our Chamber members. They have all

had a role in making this a wonderful year. I think my favorite part of being Chair were the ribbon cuttings and celebrating all the new businesses in our community this past year. Another favorite for me were all the introductions of New Members at our monthly Chamber Mixers! Getting to shake their hands and welcoming them to the Pleasanton Chamber. Collectively, it's all our members that have given me a new appreciation of how blessed I am to be a part of this thriving community. There are so many great, friendly and hardworking people that network with one another in the Tri Valley. I was proud to be a part of that.

I have been fortunate to raise my boys here, work here, and live in Pleasanton for the past 32 years. I love the Pleasanton Chamber, and I will continue to support our members and local businesses for years to come. Thank you all for allowing me to serve as your Chamber Board Chair this past year and I look forward to seeing you around town.

Wishing you all health and success!



Shawn Henley
Board Chair
Pleasanton Chamber

A Voice for Business

One of the most important roles the Chamber serves is to advocate on behalf of our members — to government and to the community. Chamber members are mostly local businesses, so the Chamber's voice is effectively the voice of the local business community. This is an important role for us to play, because businesses need to be heard when issues that affect them are being debated.

What is equally important is that the community, especially those elected to represent the community, not only hears the Chamber's voice but respects it, even if they disagree. Freedom of speech is the freedom to articulate an opinion or idea without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction. This right is given to individuals and communities, including a community of businesses.

It isn't always the case that those who disagree can still work together to reach common goals. That is why it is critical that we understand — all of us — that having a difference of opinion is just that, a difference of opinion, and that the true work we all engage in — to make our community the best place to live, work, stay and play — is the most important work we do, individually and collectively.

As an entity, a Chamber of

Commerce has existed for over 400 years as a partnership between local government and local businesses to boost economic growth in the community. At its root, this partnership is built on two things: trust and respect. The Pleasanton Chamber wants our elected officials to succeed in their work to help the community prosper, even if they pursue decisions we don't agree with. The most important outcome is the one that benefits the community, regardless of the choices made.

November 5 is Election Day. Votes will be cast, and outcomes will be realized. And while the Chamber has opinions about what we'd like to see happen that day, the most important day is the next day. Once the election is over, we need to continue working in partnership to boost economic growth in Pleasanton and we need to do so with trust and respect. The Chamber stands ready to do our part to make this the best community in the Bay Area. We will do so with our local representatives, regardless of who wins their respective races. And we will continue serving our role as an advocate for the business community, which has been one of our core functions since before there was a United States of America.



James Cooper
President/CEO
Pleasanton Chamber

David Wong Reflects on His Term as Board Chair of Pleasanton Young Professionals

A Journey of Growth, Gratitude, and Community

As we're coming towards the end of the year, this will end my term as the Board Chair for the Pleasanton Young Professionals. I would like to express my deepest gratitude for my involvement in this group, as it has been a wild ride, but also the most humbling experience to be a part of. For the past two years, I was able to make new networks and friends, hone my public speaking skills, developed tremendous growth within myself, and received



David Wong
Board Chair
Pleasanton Young Professionals

opportunities that I wouldn't have gotten without my involvement. When I first took on the role, I had a vision of how I wanted to grow the group, and in order to do so we had to implement intentional strategies. We brought forth collaborations with

other young professional groups, chambers, non-profits, and local businesses. We have also tried new ways of doing things and diminishing old habits and reinventing how we want this group to be perceived as. This group has been around for more than a decade now, and due to the pandemic, we were able to surmount that, do things differently, and we were able to revitalize this growing community as we currently see it today. We've realized how much of a needed

asset this was. Our demographic and our community are looking for in-person ways to connect with other professionals who are concurrently in the same situation as them, and we're able to bring forth a supportive environment of inclusion, as



well as fun.

None of this would be possible without the ongoing support of many. First off, the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce staff, ambassadors, and chamber members have been a huge proponent of our growth, by giving us a platform to restart, helping spread the word to grow the group, and allowing it to thrive the way it is

today. All the events take planning, so it also takes a village of individuals, our executive committee, from past and present, who volunteer their time within their busy schedules to create insights and ideas, and make sure our events are well-coordinated, scheduled, and received well. And

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