



WELCOME

An Open Letter to the Soledad Community: Clarifying The Planning of this Year's 4th of July Celebration

Originally published July 10, 2026

The City of Soledad was disappointed that it was unable to provide financial support for the community fireworks show this year. We recognize how much the annual 4th of July celebration means to our residents and appreciate the tremendous efforts of the volunteers who make this tradition possible.

Recently, there has been some confusion regarding the City's role in the annual 4th of July festivities and its partnership with the 4th of July Committee. We would like to provide some clarification.

The 4th of July Committee is an independent volunteer organization made up of dedicated community members who plan, organize, and coordinate the annual celebration. While the City has proudly partnered with the Committee for many years to help ensure a safe and successful event, the Committee is not a City commission, committee, or department. Likewise, the City did not collect donations or manage fundraising for the fireworks display.

The decision not to provide City funding for the 2026 fireworks show was made during the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget process. The City did not commit to paying for any portion of the 2026 fireworks display, was not contractually responsible for making a fireworks deposit, and the cancellation of the show was not the result of the City failing to make a required payment.

Although the City could not provide financial assistance this year, it continued its longstanding tradition of supporting the celebration through significant in-kind services. Historically, City staff have assisted by installing traffic control devices, providing electrical service, placing trash receptacles, furnishing police officers for public safety, assigning CAL FIRE personnel to stand by during the fireworks display, and providing Parks and Recreation staff to support children's activities.

Over the years, the City has also provided direct financial support for the fireworks display when funding allowed. In some years, the City paid the full cost, while in others the expense was shared with the 4th of July Committee. In 2023, the City funded the entire \$20,000 fireworks show. As costs continued to rise, City staff worked to identify a more affordable vendor, reducing the cost to approximately \$15,000 in 2024 and \$17,225 in 2025. The 4th of July Committee also successfully raised \$8,287.50 in private donations in 2025 to help offset the cost of the display.

The discussion regarding the City's long-term role in funding fireworks began in September 2024, when the City Council considered the increasing cost of the annual display and whether ongoing financial responsibility should remain with the City or transition to a community-supported model. While the Council approved funding for the 2025 fireworks show, staff were directed to evaluate whether continued financial support would be sustainable given the City's overall fiscal outlook.

During development of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget, the City faced significant financial challenges. Rising costs associated with inflation, insurance, 911 dispatch services, and required staffing increases under the City's CAL FIRE agreement created a General Fund deficit of approximately \$510,000, requiring the use of reserves to balance the budget. To address these challenges, the City reduced or eliminated several discretionary expenditures, including funding for the annual fireworks display. This decision was communicated to the 4th of July Committee before the City Council adopted the budget on June 18, 2025.

The City Council reaffirmed this action during its December 17, 2025 discussion regarding sponsorship of community events. At that meeting, the Council confirmed that while the City would continue providing substantial in-kind support for the Fourth of July celebration including Police, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and CAL FIRE services, we could no longer commit General Fund dollars to the fireworks display while addressing long-term public safety funding needs, particularly maintaining fire protection and emergency medical services.

While the City was unable to contribute funding toward this year's fireworks show, we remain dedicated to working alongside the 4th of July Committee and our community partners to support the 4th of July festivities and preserve this safe, meaningful, and valued local tradition.

Sincerely,
Megan Hunter
City Manager

PAST EVENTS

Soledad Honors Soledad Unified School District Superintendent Randy Bangs Upon his Retirement

At their June 17, 2026 meeting, the Soledad City Council adopted a proclamation honoring Soledad Unified School District Superintendent Randy Bangs upon his retirement.

Randy Bangs dedicated 17 cumulative years of service to the Soledad Unified School District since 1997, most recently serving as Superintendent from 2021 to 2026, and throughout his tenure provided exceptional leadership and service in numerous roles, including Interim Superintendent, Associate Superintendent of Educational Services, Director of Special Projects, High School Principal, and Middle School Principal.

Soledad Mayor Anna Velazquez presented Superintendent Bangs with a City proclamation at the June 24th SUSD Board meeting.

Please join us in thanking Superintendent Bangs for his contributions to the Soledad community



Soledad Celebrates Parks and Recreation Month with Official Proclamation

The Soledad City Council officially proclaimed July as Parks and Recreation Month during its July 1 meeting, recognizing the important role parks, recreation programs, and community spaces play in enhancing the quality of life for Soledad residents. Councilmember Ben Caldera read the proclamation into the official record before the City Council unanimously adopted it.

Parks and Recreation Month is celebrated nationwide each July to highlight the essential role local park and recreation agencies play in building healthy, vibrant, and connected communities. Throughout the month, the City of Soledad encourages residents of all ages to take advantage of local parks, trails, recreation programs, and community events.



Soledad Adopts Proclamation for the United State of America's 250th Anniversary

At their July 1st meeting, the Soledad City Council adopted a proclamation celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America, the 175th Anniversary of California Statehood, and the proud heritage of the City of Soledad. The proclamation was presented to the Soledad Historical Society



2026 Hot Summer Days

Thank you so much to everyone who helped make the 5th Annual Hot Summer Days a reality. Thank you to our sponsors, partners, and community for joining us today on Front Street for a day filled with cars, community, live music, children's activities, food vendors, and so much more

Hartnell College Ribbon Cutting for Soledad CTE Expansion

In her remarks at the ribbon cutting event for Hartnell College's Career Technical Education Soledad Expansion, Soledad Mayor Anna Velazquez thanked Hartnell College for its commitment to South County, thanked Hartnell district voters for their support of 2016's Measure T, and thanked former Mayor Fred Ledesma and the 2018 Soledad City Council for their foresight in investing in educational opportunities for



Soledad residents.

The expansion will serve as the dedicated home for Hartnell College's Advanced Diesel Technology program and will be located next to the existing Hartnell Soledad Education Center. The facility opening is targeted for October 2027, with the first classes beginning in the Spring 2028 semester.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Storytime with the Mayor

Join Mayor Anna Velazquez for a special storytime and arts & craft event for children and learn about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

📍 Monterey County Free Libraries--
Soledad Branch
📅 Saturday, July 25
🕒 10AM

El Mercadito

El Mercadito returns in August at the Cesar Chavez Park in Soledad. Enjoy live entertainment, delicious food, and incredible local vendors.

📍 550 Front Street
📅 Saturday, August 1
🕒 11AM to 4PM



National Night Out

Join the Soledad Police Department for National Night Out at the Soledad Community Center. Attendance is free and open to the public.

📍 Soledad Community Center (560 Walker Drive)
📅 Tuesday, August 4
🕒 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Music in the Park

Join the Soledad Parks and Recreation Department for the last Music in the Park event of the summer!

📍 555 Front Street in Downtown Soledad
📅 Friday, August 14, 2026
🕒 5:30PM - 8PM



OPPORTUNITIES

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY 🗳️ : Candidate filing for the 2026 City Council election is underway. Visit the [City of Soledad's website](#) for eligibility requirements, filing information and important

dates.

FREE BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN AGES 0-5 📖 : Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is now serving Monterey County. Through the Imagination Library, you can receive FREE books for your child ages 0-5 directly to your home address. [Sign up today.](#)

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMITTEE (LAFCO) SEEKS PUBLIC MEMBER 🗳️ : The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of Monterey County is an independent regulatory agency that controls the boundaries of cities and special districts. LAFCO is currently seeking a member of the public to serve on the committee. [Learn more and apply before August 14, 2026.](#)

UNWIND WITH A WELLNESS SOUND BATH AT THE SOLEDAD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS 💜 : Kacey Rodenbush, Behavioral Health Services Manager will facilitate a wellness sound bath on Saturday, August 29 from 9-10AM at the Soledad Family Resource Center for adults 18 years and older. [Register online.](#)

DO YOU NEED COMPOST OR MULCH? ♻️ Residents and businesses of Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City, and the County can purchase DISCOUNTED compost at the Johnson Canyon Landfill in Gonzales. Discounted Rate: Compost: \$25/CY or Mulch: \$21/CY. Non-composted materials (wood chips or soil mixes) are not eligible. At the landfill compost area, ask for the "procurement rate" and fill out a short form with your name, contact information, and the anticipated location where the material will be used.



Copyright © 2026 City of Soledad, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

