



# Downey Business

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DOWNEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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www.DOWNEYCHAMBER.org • info@downeychamber.com | NOVEMBER 2021 • VOL 49 • NO. 11

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## It's Parade Time

The Downey Christmas Parade is back - Sunday, December 5th at 1:00! This year is our **70th** year, and the theme is "Christmas Together." Like always, the parade route is on Downey Avenue. We can't wait to see the community come out to what is going to be a wonderful start to the Christmas Season. As special THANK YOU to our Title Sponsor, Financial Partners Credit Union! We look forward to their amazing Parade Entry!



## Welcome Jersey Mikes!

October 27th was the date for the newest Jersey Mike's ribbon cutting. The shop's location is on the corner of Lakewood Blvd. and Gallatin near the Planet Fitness. Store Manager, Charles Davis was a perfect host to the Directors and Ambassadors of the Downey Chamber who all recommended the fresh and delicious sandwiches!!



Helping Store Manager, Charles Davis (center, in hat) with the official scissors are (starting left) Chamber Directors, Greg Welsh of Risher Mortuary, Rain Ng of Tech Builders, Carmen Gonzales of Kaiser Permanente, Jeanie Woods of Albertson's, Davis, Chamber Board President Sheila Tetangco-Bartolone of the Downey Foundation, and Paula Mejia of C and E Finance.



Voting is now open for all of Downey to select their favorites! The Downey Chamber of Commerce will be conducting a survey/contest to find out who is the BEST in nearly 50 categories. Get your business seen by placing ads in Downey Business, in hopes to improve your chances of winning! This event is open to all businesses in the City of Downey and everyone can vote! Check the Downey Chamber's website for rules and voting instructions. The winners will be announced at a special Chamber Mixer to be held in February. For special advertising rates, please call Julie at 562-249-1206 or email julie@thedowneypatriot.com.

## Welcome to our New Members!

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### 1st Choice Tax and Accounting Services, inc.

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## Congratulations and Thank You!

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Temple Ner Tamid, 22 years  
Beautiful Homes Real Estate, 5 years  
United Sealants & Adhesives, 2 years

## Lifetime Members

Steve Allen • Diane Boggs  
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DOWNEY BUSINESS

--STAFF--

Michael Calvert, Executive Director  
Sarah Sellers, Administrative Assistant

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The board of directors meets at the chamber office on the third Monday of each month at 12:00 noon.

Message from the President



Hello Downey!

I cannot believe we are already in the 4th quarter of 2021! Thanksgiving (one of my favorite holidays because I am such a foodie) is just a few weeks away. Before you know it, Christmas will be upon us.

As you run around Downey doing all your holiday grocery and gift shopping, don't forget to patronize our local restaurants while you are out. Make sure to stop by the newly reopened Guacamaya Oasis, now located at the Promenade, right in front of the movie theaters.

Andrew Vizcarra, the owner, grew up in Huntington Park, but his family always dreamed of moving to Downey. Every Sunday after mass when Andrew was only 7, his parents would drive to Downey and "look at the big houses." His mother told him and his siblings that one day they would have a home in Downey.

His parents were able to build a successful business and move to Downey when Andrew was 14. Growing up in Downey, Andrew began watching the Food Network. One of his favorite shows, "Chopped," fueled his passion for food and creativity. He loved making something delicious out of random ingredients he would find at home. He started helping his mom in the kitchen and creating his own recipes. Like his parents, he too wanted to own his own business. If you couple that with his love of cooking - opening a restaurant was inevitable. Andrew wanted a restaurant that incorporated his love for Mexican food, but with a healthier twist. After watching a documentary called "What the Health," he learned about the great benefits of a plant-based diet and was inspired.

Andrew added more plant-based dishes into his own diet, as well as into his restaurant - especially because of the difficulty he had finding vegan options nearby. Andrew says, "Most Mexican restaurants have beans cooked with lard and rice made with chicken stock. This is what prompted me to transition my restaurant into being fully vegan. Opening the first vegan restaurant in Downey was a risky move, but I believe the benefits of a plant-based diet far outweigh those risks. Doing the right thing with purpose is better than doing the wrong thing for a profit."

Personally, I have already eaten at Guacamaya Oasis several times since they reopened, and I can tell you - everything I have had is delicious - and I am not a vegetarian nor do I ever eat Vegan. But their food keeps bringing me back! My favorite so far is the Guacamaya Wrap with Soy Rizo. And their drinks/agua frescas are so refreshing! Definitely make it a point to stop by and try a few things if you are out and about in Downey.

As we celebrate the Holidays, I am so happy that this year, we will be able to spend it together with family and friends, instead of quarantined. These last 2 months of the year are usually the happiest for the Tetangco and Bartolone families. So, that said, I wish you and your family a wonderful, fun-and-food-filled Thanksgiving.

Stay safe everyone!

Sheila Tetangco-Bartolone, President  
Downey Chamber of Commerce



(Right to Left) Pictured with Chamber Executive Director Michael Calvert and Chamber President Sheila Tetangco-Bartolone are Guacamaya Oasis owner Andrew Vizcarra and general manager Charlene Bohorquez.

Message from the Executive Director



Good to know that the State of Downey is in great shape! On October 19th our Mayor, Claudia Frometa gave an amazing outline on the accomplishments of our City. Even in the face of this worldwide pandemic, Downey has rebuilt our library, fire stations, parks, and renewed miles of local streets. But improving infrastructure is not the only accomplishment our city government has achieved. Mayor Frometa recapped programs available to renters to help with delinquent rent. Homeless programs and Veteran benefits that are available to help those citizens hurt by COVID.

What was truly heart-warming regarding Mayor Frometa's remarks was how collaborative these accomplishments were. Many "thanks" for their efforts were bestowed on the Mayor's fellow councilmembers, our City Manager, Gilbert Livas, Community Development Department headed by Aldo Schindler, Public Works Department led by City Engineer Delfino Consunji. Also being praised was the Parks and Recreation Department for their work with feeding Downey's senior citizens. Multiple opportunities of recognition were given to Downey's Police and Fire Departments for their incredible responses during the pandemic.

It was an honor for the Chamber to host such a worthwhile event! I attend almost all the meetings of our City Council. If you attend or follow the proceeds on streaming services, based on comments made, you could get the impression that Downey is in serious trouble, but nothing could be further from the truth. Our City government has a caring heart and actively looks for ways to help our citizens that are in need. That should be celebrated, and our civic leaders should receive our continued support.

Two events coming up for the Chamber. November 11th will be a multi-chamber mixer and tour of the Sofi Stadium. It's an amazing tour and our group will get to "run the tunnel" just like the Pros do. Also, IT'S PARADE TIME!! So please contact us at the office for any questions you may have and to sign up for the events.

Have a Happy Fall!!

Michael Calvert, Executive Director  
Downey Chamber of Commerce




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Legal Corner | Effective Background Check Policy



Introduction

It is common practice for employers to use some form of background checks as a helpful tool in making employment decisions, but employers should proceed with caution when doing so. Many may be blissfully unaware that their current background check policy could increase their legal exposure. The good news is that there are steps that employers can take to ensure that their policy is both effective and legally compliant.

Legal Considerations

Federal law requires employers to provide employees and job applicants written notification of a background screen for employment purposes, which is known as a "disclosure." It must be clear and conspicuous, exist as a stand-alone document, and the disclosure must be signed by the applicant or employee. The disclosure must not contain any additional information. Any slight deviation could result in harsh consequences. For example, some employers make the mistake of including liability waivers or specific instructions regarding how an individual could request their background check from the third-party consumer reporting agency. Even if this information is included in good faith, this is considered a violation of the law and can lead to costly penalties.

Several states, including California, have laws that prohibit employers from asking criminal-history questions before extending a job offer. In fact, California's Department of Fair Employment and Housing actively searches for online job advertisements that unlawfully state that applicants with a criminal record need not apply.

Does this mean that an employer can never ask about an applicant's criminal history? Not necessarily. California law allows employers to conduct a background screen on job applicants only after extending a conditional job offer. However, if employers wish to rescind a job offer due to an applicant's unsuccessful background screen, the law requires employers to first perform an individualized assessment of the individual's conviction history, provide written notification that a conviction disqualifies an individual from employment, and allow the individual a chance to respond to the employer's decision.

Creating a Legal Background Check Policy

Employers should create a written policy that includes: what kind of background check they will use; who will be screened; what information will be checked; how an employer will use the results in making employment decisions. Partnering with an accredited background check company may help with ensuring that the policy is legally compliant.

Employers should ensure that their Disclosure document meets the "clear and conspicuous" and "standalone" requirements. More importantly, the document should not include any information beyond what is required by the law.

If an employer intends to make an adverse employment decision based on the results of a background screen, they should first consider whether the results would truly disqualify an individual from the job duties in question. An employer must provide an applicant or employee an opportunity to reject or explain any unsatisfactory information before making a final employment decision. This process allows employers to make a fully informed decision.

Conclusion

The potential legal consequences of conducting improper background checks highlight the importance of creating an effective background check policy. To avoid liability, employers should take a good hard look at their current background check policy for any of the above violations and consider seeking legal counsel for assistance in reviewing the policy.

Colin P. Calvert is a partner in the Irvine, California office of the labor and employment law firm Fisher & Phillips LLP. Please do not hesitate to contact him if you have any questions or seek additional information. Mr. Calvert may be reached at (949) 798-2160.

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- Business is located within Downey city boundaries  
• *La empresa debe estar ubicada dentro de los limites de la ciudad de Downey*
- Must be in good standing with the City.  
• *Debe estar al dia con la ciudad*

For full program guidelines and to see if your business qualifies, visit:  
*Para conocer las normas completas del programa y saber si su empresa reúne los requisitos, visite:*

 <https://www.downeyca.org/covid-19-business-assistance>

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