



Downey Business

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DOWNEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

11131 BROOKSHIRE AVENUE • DOWNEY • CALIFORNIA • 90241 | PHONE (562) 923-2191

www.DOWNEYCHAMBER.org • info@downeychamber.com | FEBRUARY 2019 • VOL 47 • NO. 2

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THE CHAMBER IS 116 YEARS OLD...AND LOOKING BETTER THAN EVER!!

February marks the 116th Anniversary of the Downey Chamber of Commerce. What started out in 1903 as the Downey Board of Trade and only had 20 members. Since then the Chamber has grown into an organization of nearly 500 members. In 1903 or 2019, the Chamber has always been the Civic Organization to promote Downey Business and to ensure that our City is a wonderful place to work and live. The office recently found minutes of Chamber Board Meetings from 1906. In the handwritten minutes, the Board was raising over \$100,000 to prevent flooding between the two river beds bordering the City. Just an example of how the Chamber has always been there to do what's best for Downey.

Come join us on February 28th at 11:30 to celebrate the Downey Chamber of Commerce. We will be meeting at the Embassy Suites Hotel, a Hilton Property, where we will be awarding our Businesses of the Year, recognizing 40 members with special anniversaries! The Chamber will also be naming our Director, Ambassador and Volunteer of the year. Of course, you will want to witness our favorite tradition, the cutting of the Anniversary Cake by our Past Presidents. Please check our website or email us at blake@downeychamber.com.



Downey Business

--STAFF--

Michael Calvert, Executive Director
Sarah Sellers, Administrative Assistant
Blake Calvert, Interm Events Coordinator

DOWNEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
11131 Brookshire Avenue
Downey, CA 90241
(562) 923-2191
email: info@downeychamber.com
www.downeychamber.com

--OFFICERS--

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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 Everyone,

Great start of the year! Southern California were we lack the rain throughout the year but in January we got a fair share of rain and snow for 7-days. OH what a sight from our community here in Downey to see the snow cap mountains every day. This is the reason why we live in Southern California, an opportunity to go the mountain in two hours or go biking at the beach which it will be an hour away.

New Logo and New beginning, I can't wait to see a couple of new businesses that will be opening in the Downey community in the month of February. I recently went to a ribbon cutting Urrutia & Company, yes raining during the ribbon cutting but it was an awesome event to meet with the staff and owners of the company. They know what is customer service and how clients should be treated with the respect that they deserve. I wish them many success in their new place of business.

Don't forget to add your name to our mailing list, it's only a click away on the website <https://www.downeychamber.org> You will be notified of any special events going around the City of Downey, any Luncheon that you might be able to attend or maybe have an opportunity to speak with our City Officials about some issues that you are experienceing at your place of business. You can also pay for the lunch with the convenience at your desk in your office and pay with a credit card. If you have not registered your business on the website, please do so with our executive director Michael Calvert and his staff. Don't forget when you pay your membership this month ask about our banner ads pricing, so you can take advantage of our 122,000 likes in our Newly design website.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at john.casillas@fmb.com.

Thank you

-- John F Casillas, President
Downey Chamber of Commerce

Events & Meetings

Thursday, February 7 @ 12:00 pm
Let's Do Lunch
Rock and Brew
467 Stonewood St. Downey

Tuesday, February 12 @ 6:30 pm
City Council Meeting
City Hall Council Chamber

Monday, February 18, 2018
President Day
Chamber Closed

Wednesday, February 20 @ 12:00 pm
Ambassador Committee Meeting-

Tuesday, February 26 @ 6:30 pm
City Council Meeting
City Hall Council Chamber

Wednesday, February 27 @ 12:00 pm
City of Affairs
Speaker: TBT
Downey Chamber of Commerce
11131 Brookshire Ave. Downey

Thursday, February 28 @ 12:00 pm
Anniversary 116th Luncheon
Embassy Suites by Hilton-Downey
8425 Firestone Blvd. Downey

Message from the Executive Director



Welcome to Winter, which in Downey means a little rain, a little fog, and a larger heating bill! The Chamber is trying to warm things up with some exciting events. First off, one of the Chamber's favorite events is happening on February 28 at the Embassy Suites, a Hilton Hotel. Our Anniversary Luncheon is a great chance for the Chamber to honor those members that have been part of our family for decades. We have 40 companies that will be celebrating their "Chamber Anniversaries" from 5 to over 60 years!! Additionally, we reveal those members considered to be the Small and Large Businesses of the Year, so look for your

nominating ballot in your email over the next weeks. One of the special features of this event is the honoring those closest to the Chamber by awarding our Director, Ambassador, and Volunteer of the Year. The Chamber would also like to invite all the Past Presidents to attend and be a part of the traditional, "Cutting of the Cake"!! It is such a fun event and a great opportunity to reconnect with so many members for the Chamber's past. It is also a good time for our current members and staff to show our appreciation to those men and women that are the foundation for the Chamber's success!

Another topic I'd like to bring up is the new and improved Chamber website and Facebook page. Over the last 90 days our Facebook Page has enjoyed over 122,000 "likes". A lot of our entries are shared to other sites creating a circle of Chamber information throughout your market area. The Chamber is creating advertising opportunities for our members by way of social media. Please check out the newish webpage and pick your spot for your advertisement.

Please check out a new feature in this month's Business Directory, "The Mayor's Corner". As a successful businessman, Mayor Rick Rodriquez knows the importance of the relationship between the City and local business. He was a former Chamber President, which makes him keenly aware of how effective the Chamber is at strengthening that bond. It's a great read!

We are excited about what's happening at the Chamber and all the new ways that you and your company can be noticed!! Let me know your thoughts, you can reach me at my email: michael@downeychamber.com

-- Michael Calvert, Executive Director
Downey Chamber of Commerce

Ambassadors of the Month | JOANNA PETERSON & MONICA DIEN



Joanna Peterson, Immediate Past President and Ambassador Co-Chair, Gallatin Dental
Monica Dien, Ambassador Co-Chair, Financial Partners Credit Union

At the Downey Chamber of Commerce, Ambassadors are the backbone of the Chamber’s volunteer force. As we welcome the new year, we would like to thank our Ambassadors for the time and effort they commit to supporting the Chamber, bringing in new members, and acting as public relations to the community.

This year, our vision for the Ambassadors remains true: A strong focus on member connection, member retention, event support, and Chamber promotion. Through the time we have connected at meetings and events, Ambassadors have grown to support one another and have utilized these networking opportunities to grow their own businesses.

As new businesses continue emerging in the city of Downey, we want to encourage current and potential Ambassadors to engage and welcome members at Ribbon Cuttings, community events, and business mixers.

If you are interested in the opportunity to join the committee, be the first to learn about new events, and participate in networking events held in the community, please contact the Downey Chamber today!

Let’s Do Lunch

The Chamber celebrated the New Year with it’s monthly “Let’s Do Lunch,” event. Hosted by The Olive Restobar, over 30 people representing the different businesses in and around our city, came together to network and enjoy some Mediterranean food. After brief introductions of each member and what services their businesses provide the attendees enjoyed networking and conversation over complimentary pita chips and hummus followed by delicious shawarma and kabobs and ending the afternoon with complimentary baklava.

Special thanks to Sam and Guadalupe Sarofeem and the staff of The Olive (located at 8830 Apollo Way) for the complimentary appetizers and desserts, and of course to all our Chamber members who attended and made this event such a success.



Asking “what did you do over the holidays?” are Chamber Vice President, Carrie Uva of 24-Hour Real Estate, Chamber Board Member Rain Neg of Eipros, Hector Castillo of El Aviso, and Ambassador Paula Mejia of C & E Capital.



The whole gang is here enjoying a chance to network along with the wonderful menu planned by the team at The Olive.



Making our event incredible is the staff from The Olive. Thank you for serving our group and making all of us feel very special.

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Urrutia & Co. Tax Services Ribbon Cutting

Just in time for tax season!!! Urrutia & Co. is a family owned and run company that provides income tax and finance services. Owners, Lazaro and Sonia Urrutia, pledge to serve their clients like they are family, and the Chamber felt like family during their Ribbon Cutting on January 16th. Even though the weather was a little damp, the Urrutia family, along with their staff, made us all feel welcomed and explained why Urrutia & Co. are anxious to service the Downey community.

It was great to see our Mayor, City Council Members, along with Chamber Director and Ambassadors all attending and supporting our newest member. Urrutia & Co. is located at 10751 Lakewood Blvd. Suite G in Downey. They can be reached by phone at (562)381-2999 or by email at urrutiataxservice@gmail.com.



Always there to support the Downey Business Community are the representatives from City Hall. Standing in to welcome our newest member are Mayor Rick Rodriguez, Lazaro and Sonia Urrutia, and City Councilman Alex Saab.



Helping out our new Chamber Member are Ambassador Maria Robideau of Risher Mortuary, Daniel Andrade of Beautiful Homes Real Estate, Chamber President John Casillas of Farmers and Merchants Bank, Lazaro and Sonia Urrutia, Immediate Past President, Joanna Peterson of Gallatin Dental, Ambassador Paula Mejia of C & E Capital, and Chamber President Elect, Carrie Uva of 24-Hour Real Estate.

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MAYOR’S Corner



Happy New Year Downey!

I hope all of you had a wonderful time with your family during the holidays. 2019 promises to be great one for our city. There are many projects planned to better our city and quality of life. One of my initiatives is to bring back the Downey Business Watch Program. During my tenure as President of the Downey Chamber of Commerce, this program was in place and was very active in the community. Now as Mayor, I want our business community to once again work together with our Police Department and the Downey Chamber to help prevent and reduce crimes. Through this collaboration, quarterly business watch seminars will be held in the City Council Chambers. Seminars are scheduled for January 10th, April 11th, July 11th and October 10th from 9 am-10 am. I invite you to complete the Crime Prevention Survey available on the city’s website where you may share your input on which future topics you would like to see discussed at meetings. Please join us for our first meeting on January 10th to learn how to keep your business safe and how we can work together to prevent crimes.

One of my passions as a resident of Downey and as a father is to help people. Volunteering not only helps those in need but helps one feel a personal sense of accomplishment. It demonstrates one’s commitment to the community and a willingness to work for the betterment of others. Luckily in our city we have numerous local organizations that help people every day with things like free meals, clothes and even free furniture. But we need your help. Many organizations are still in need of volunteers and supplies. The second week of April is Volunteer Week. The City will be hosting a Volunteer Fair where local volunteer organizations will gather with information how you can help. There will be food trucks as well as free children activities. More information will be available on our website and social media sites as we get closer to the final date.

Our city is filled with unsung heroes. People that do great deeds and never ask or receive recognition. This year I would like to change that. They are a large reason of what makes our city great. They are Downey’s Finest. I would like to hear your story of how someone helped you. Your experience may have been with city staff, police officers, firemen, or just someone you may know who lives or works in Downey. Unsung heroes are extraordinary everyday people who do the right thing and are committed to excellence in their work, all while being humble of their everyday contributions. It’s time we give our Downey’s Finest the recognition they deserve. Please email me at rrodriguez@doweyca.org with your story so that we can recognize the individual at a city council meeting with a city certificate and city coin. I am very much looking forward to reading these stories and meeting our Downey’s Finest.

I invite you to attend our upcoming Clergy Council meeting on Monday, January 7th. The Clergy Council is a collaboration of residents, clergy, law enforcement and service providers working together to better our community. Meetings take place inside the Cormack Room at the Downey City Library. This is a wonderful group of people who together are shaping our community. I hope to see you there.

This year is going to be amazing! Thank you for allowing me to serve you and our city.

Rick Rodriguez
Mayor
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Please Join Us at Our Upcoming Ribbon Cutting



Wednesday
February 13 @ 4:30 PM
The Play Date
8335 Firestone Blvd.
Downey, CA 90241

New Members

One Place Financial
Nader Khouzam, Owner
www.oneplacefinancial.com
15728 Woodruff Ave.
Bellflower, CA 90706
(562)867-5200

American Cancer Society
Kailey Chillinsky, Community Development Manager
www.cancer.org
444 W. Ocean Blvd. #1070
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562)273-4849

The Play Date
www.theplaydate.co
Claudia Perez, Owner
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Downey, CA 90241
(562)622-5220

Edward Jones
Emma Aragon,
Financial Services
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CHAMBER on the town



As the Chamber always says, "It takes a Village!" Thank you to the City Council for honoring the Chamber's Village. Everyone in the picture worked tirelessly to bring the annual event to the streets of Downey. To be appreciated is wonderful, and to be appreciated by the members of City Council is a great experience.



One of the many great things coming from our new Mayor's office is the bringing back of Downey's Business Watch. Business Watch is a joint venture between City Hall, the Downey Police Department and the Downey Chamber of Commerce. Much like Neighborhood, BW allows business owners to band together and provide security. January 10th, at the City Library, was the initial meeting of our group. Downey PD talked about having an active shooter in your work place. Business Watch will be meeting quarterly with compelling topics each session. Watch for the date, time and topic on our website calendar.

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Ambassador Lunch

The Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors met at Narai Thai Cuisine to ring in the New Year and discuss plans for 2019. Before lunch the Ambassadors networked and discussed their plans to promote their businesses in 2019. They are all very excited about participating in upcoming events such as our Anniversary Luncheon and State of the City Luncheon.

The Ambassadors are our premier volunteer group, they aide the community by helping the Chamber of Commerce organize community events such as: The Christmas Parade, The Rio Hondo Golf Tournament, and The Street Fair. Thanks Joanna Peterson of Gallatin Dental and Monica Dien of Financial Partners Credit Union for organizing this important monthly event luncheon.



Hard to get such an active group to stand still for a picture, but the Chamber did it! Enjoying the great food and service from our hosts at Narai Thai are (seated) Pam Powers of Pacific Western Bank, Cindy Kovach of US Bank, Michael Calvert, Maria Robideau of Risher Mortuary, Linda Joco of Home Instead Senior Care, Ana Fuentes of Financial Partners Credit Union, Alex Hanks of Ocean Breeze Spam, Paula Mejia of C & E Capital, and Sonia Delgado of MR & Associates. Standing are Joanna Peterson of Gallatin Dental, Ron Long of Sun Run, Monica Dien and Sheila Tetangco-Bartolone both of Financial Partners Credit Union and Daniel Andrade of Beautiful Homes.

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Thank you for your continued participation and support!

-The Downey Chamber of Commerce-

Dress Code and Personal Appearance Policies: Best Practices



A personal dress code policy exists at the vortex of many competing, and sometimes opposing, considerations. Companies, especially those whose employees regularly interact with the public, want to present a certain carefully crafted image to their customers in order to maximize their experience and properly represent the company. However, employees' individuality and personality can be stifled by a strict dress code. Furthermore, companies must be mindful of how religious practices intersect with a dress code. A company could face a lawsuit resulting in significant damages and legal fees if an employees' religious beliefs are impermissibly impacted by a dress code. Therefore, it is critical to both know and follow the law when creating and enforcing a dress code.

Creating the Policy

The company's employee handbook is an excellent location for a dress code to be located as confusion can be kept to a minimum and employees can be held responsible for following the policy. This way, all employees are made aware of the dress code as soon as they start working for the Company.

Companies should communicate with existing employees when a new dress code is created, or when there have been changes to an existing policy. Employers can accomplish this relatively easily with a mass email or by distributing a simple printed document. Whatever the method, communication is key. Employees cannot be expected to abide by rules they know nothing about.

Dress codes policies exist along a spectrum, with some being extremely detailed and others vague. There advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. A more detailed policy will allow employers to better control what employees wear. This also helps newer employees who are still learning the company's culture. However, a strict dress code can cause employees to feel micromanaged by the Company. A more vague policy allows management to exercise discretion and will not cause employees to feel as micromanaged. Conversely, consistent enforcement of the dress code and appearance policy will be more difficult and newer employees will have less guidance.

Management should consider consulting their workforce before creating or amending a dress code or personal appearance policy. Getting employee input into what they consider to be appropriate and what they think needs improvement would provide valuable information. Furthermore, if employees feel like they have helped create the policy they are more likely to buy in to its terms.

Religious Accommodations

Federal and state law govern religious dress and grooming in the workplace, and dictate what employers must do to accommodate their employees' religious practices. It is absolutely critical that employers know the rules when making or enforcing a dress code. Companies can face discrimination charges if their policies lead some employees being treated differently than others. Liability can be further created by denying a reasonable accommodation based on religion, segregating employees based on their religious beliefs, harassing or retaliating against an employee due to their religion, and/ or retaliating against an employee seeking a reasonable accommodation. However, companies need not allow a deviation from a policy if doing so would create an undue hardship. Several factors are considered when determining if an accommodation is an undue hardship, including: the cost of the accommodation, whether it compromises workplace safety, reduces efficiency, violates other employees' rights, or if it requires other employees to do more work as a result of the accommodation.

An employee is not required to undertake any formal process to seek an accommodation. Typically, accommodations are sought verbally or in writing to an employee's supervisor. Management should engage in an interactive process to discuss the request and brainstorm about ways in which the employee can be accommodated as soon as a company is aware that an employee has a conflict between religious obligations and the dress code.



Religion is defined very broadly, and includes more established faiths such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, etc, and also newer emerging faiths. A person does not have to attend worship services or follow the exact teachings of the faith in order to be considered religious. However, social, political, or economic philosophies are not considered to be religious, even if these views are strongly held by an employee. Determining whether a practice is religious must be judged on a case by case basis, and depends on the employee's subjective motivations rather than the objective actions.

Federal and state law governing religious accommodations must be forefront in any hotel's dress code and personal appearance policies. A proper balance must be struck between maintaining a uniform dress code, and allowing for legally protected religious expression.


Conclusion

Employee appearance is a critical to many Companies. Ensuring that employees are dressed consistently with the image a company is hoping to convey to their customers can best be accomplished by a written dress code that appears in the employee handbook. While a dress code provides many benefits, it can be the source of great liability if the dress code violates state or federal law governing religious expression in the workplace.

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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Downey Cemetery Ribbon Cutting

When you are asked to join many of the City's best and brightest at the Downey Cemetery, at night, for a ribbon cutting...well you can't turn down that invitation. So, it was on January 23, the Downey Cemetery District hosted an event to highlight the new lighting and decorative gates which will bring needed security to a location which has been plagued with many reports of vandalism.

Opened in 1868, The Downey Cemetery is the final resting place of many of the city's pioneers. In May of 1981, during the Memorial Day Celebration, the cemetery was named a historic landmark. Over 3000 souls are buried there including veterans of every war from the Mexican American War of 1846 through the Vietnam conflict. Many tombstones at the cemetery incorporate design and materials that are no longer in use. It's very important that this landmark was given added protection with these new measures.

This was a joint effort with funding provided by the County of Los Angeles through the office of Supervisor Janice Hahn, along with the City of Downey and much of the work being done by the City's Maintenance and Parks and Recreation Departments.



Photo by Claudia Gomez

Testing out the new gate are Chamber Member Brain Heyman, Vice Chairman of the Cemetery District, John Unkovich, Cemetery Trustee, **Mayor Pro Tem Blanca Pacheco, Chamber Treasurer David Gafin, Cemetery District Chairman, County Supervisor for District 4 Janice Hahn, Mayor Rick Rodriquez, City Councilman Alex Saab and Chamber Executive Director, Michael Calvert**

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