

Recap: January 2016 WALI Semi-Annual Forum

WALI first semi-annual forum of 2016 was held January 14, 2016 at the Riverview Community Center in Guadalupe. The ***Leveraging Opportunities, Meeting Economic Challenges*** breakfast forum featured an overview of Santa Barbara County data from “Struggling to Get By: The Real Cost Measure”, a 2015 report by United Ways of California analyzing how much it really takes families to “get by” in various California regions. According to the report, which was presented by Henry Gascon, Manager of Program/Policy Development for United Ways of California, it takes \$56,279 for a family with one infant, one school-age child in Santa Barbara County to cover housing, food, health care, transportation, childcare, and other fixed costs. Following the “Real Cost Measure” presentation, the WALI forum featured the panel “Leveraging Opportunities, Meeting Economic Challenges”, providing a cross-talk opportunity between education, government and business leaders about the current economic and workforce preparation issues facing North County. Panel participants included: Ed Cora, Superintendent of Guadalupe Union School District; John Fowler, President/CEO, Peoples’ Self-Help Housing; Teresa Gallavan, Economic Development Director/Assistant City Administrator, City of Lompoc; Eileen Monahan, Manager, First 5 Office of Early Care & Education, County of Santa Barbara; Glenn Morris, CEO, Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Commission; Kevin Walthers, President/Superintendent, Allan Hancock College, and moderator Victoria Conner, Initiatives Director, EconAlliance. Sponsors of the event included Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E), the WARE Group, ERG California, Community West Bank, Solar City, Clos Pepe Vineyard, and the Santa Maria Times/Lee Newspapers.