



Happy New Year and Greetings to All Our Investors, Friends and Partners,

As we enter a new year, we enter with hope and optimism that this pandemic will soon be over. 2020 was a trying year in so many ways. Despite the challenges we faced, Opportunity Stanislaus made some great strides last year, and we expect to build upon that momentum in 2021.

One very positive development has been our organization's involvement in the Bay Area Megaregion Alliance. This is a partnership between Opportunity Stanislaus, the Bay Area Council, the Greater Sacramento Economic Council, and the San Joaquin Partnership. Our purpose is to collaborate to improve economic vitality throughout the region, and to work together on economic development, transportation, housing, business climate and other regional issues. We are already working on some important projects that will benefit our region.

Another exciting initiative to look forward to is a new 5-year economic development strategy and plan. Our former plan will sunset this year, and we will work with you to determine the primary focus areas for Opportunity Stanislaus over the next five years. Building a sound strategic plan involves many people. The world has changed due to the pandemic. We will need to put our heads together to determine what Opportunity Stanislaus should focus on going forward. Opportunity Stanislaus has retained the services of Strategic Solutions to help us build our strategic plan. Many of you were involved six years ago when we engaged Strategic Solutions to help us then. We have built a strong partnership with Tom Mucks, Fred Mickelson, Mike Noonan and their team and look forward to the excitement of a new 5-year plan.

To better serve you better we have reorganized our workforce team. We are excited to announce that we have promoted Amber Edwards to serve as Vice President of Workforce Development. Amber will oversee our various workforce programs such as our HR Concierge program, WorkKeys, Sector Strategy and new training programs that we will announce in the future. On Amber's team are Kim Whitcomb, Teresa Green and Gavin Bruce. As a result of this move, all marketing functions will be handled by April Potter, Director of Market Research, along with her business research responsibilities. Assisting her will be Karan Brar.

We also are pleased to announce that Tyler Richardson, Chief Business Services Officer for Opportunity Stanislaus, is now the Executive Director of VOLT Institute. Tyler has been overseeing the day-to-day operations of VOLT, but this move will give him the title and authority to manage VOLT Institute and move it to the next level. Dr. Ray Cawthorne will take on the responsibility of Lead Instructor and will monitor and manage the instruction at VOLT.

We are also pleased to announce two new board members. Mary-Elizabeth Eberhardt, Vice President of Consumer Banking at the Bank of Stockton, has recently joined the board. Mary-Elizabeth has a passion for our region and for economic development. She has a long history of banking in the Northern San Joaquin Valley. Bank of Stockton has been a key partner of Opportunity Stanislaus for many years. [Read her bio here on our website.](#) Brad Stegmann is the CEO of the Automation Group, a locally owned company in Modesto that serves the local manufacturing community through the design, installation, and servicing of sophisticated automation systems. We enjoy a partnership with the Automation Group through our PLC Bootcamps at VOLT Institute. We warmly welcome Brad to the Opportunity Stanislaus Board of Directors! [Read Brad's bio here on our website.](#)

We very much appreciate you and your contributions to economic development in our county and region. We are fortunate to have so many great companies in our region that provide quality jobs and support the community. Please let us know how we can serve you better.

Best regards,

Dave