

CASA de ORO ALLIANCE

A CALIFORNIA PUBLIC BENEFIT NONPROFIT CORPORATION

NEWSLETTER FALL 2019

A historically rich, culturally diverse, thriving community that is attractive, safe, pedestrian friendly, and a popular destination for dining, entertainment and shopping.



Gaetano's Italian Restaurant

By Rachel Clibborn

Casa De Oro has some good restaurants and Gaetano's Italian restaurant is one of them. Whether it is their fabulous Gaetano's special pizza, with that incredible crust, the eggplant parmesan, good old spaghetti and meatballs or antipasto salad, Gaetano's does not disappoint.

The restaurant, at 10025 Campo Road, is a Casa De Oro institution and has been in its current location since long before 1971, when the DiGiovannis bought it. Gaetano's has been serving up wonderful food with only the freshest ingredients at reasonable prices for generations.

They will not skimp on quality. Only the best will do. They make their own Italian dressing and the sauces are made fresh daily, as is the dough for the pizzas and table bread. They have been buying the bread for the sandwiches for over 20 years from Frank's Bakery Gibaldi's Italian Bread down the block. It's fantastic that our local businesses support each other, isn't it?

What has changed over the years? Well, not the menu. The dishes are old family recipes. People's taste in wine has changed though. Back in the day, folks used to drink a lot of rosé. Now it is not as popular. People seem to prefer red or white, so there is a variety of wine to choose from, and lots of options for craft beer too.

How did the DiGiovannis end up in Spring Valley running a restaurant? In 1971, Neil and Giuseppe DiGiovanni were just kids---16 and 19 years old--- living on the island of Ponza in Italy. One day their father asked the family if they would like to go to New York and check out America, as he had a green card. They agreed and immediately moved!

The boys started working in a family restaurant and they learned the restaurant business well. When they were 19 and 22, they decided to take a road trip to check out California. They ended up in San Diego and found Gaetano's Restaurant for sale. They contacted the family in New York and said they had bought a restaurant and would be staying in San Diego.

Several years later Neil married Evelyn who was working in the restaurant, and all these years later Gaetano's is still one of the best family-run restaurants in our area. Evelyn has taken over running of the restaurant now, with help from a wonderful team who are like family to her. One of the employees has even been there for over 30 years.

Evelyn prides herself on the restaurant being like a real family. Not only the team that works there, but also their patrons are considered family. Some of the teens that used to come in with their parents now bring their own children.

Aren't we lucky to have this wonderful family still running the restaurant? So what's for dinner tonight? Let's have yummy Italian food and support this fine restaurant that has been a stalwart of this community for so long.

**CASA de ORO
ALLIANCE**

Bob Yarris
President

Ed Batchelder
Secretary

Michael Herron
Treasurer

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Don Powell
*Beautification &
Community Events*

Holly Yarris
Allan Arthur
*Economic Development &
Fundraising*

Lisa Stewart
Michael Herron
Government Affairs

Cindy Schmidt
Dustin Bennett
Public Information & Outreach

CasadeOroAlliance.org

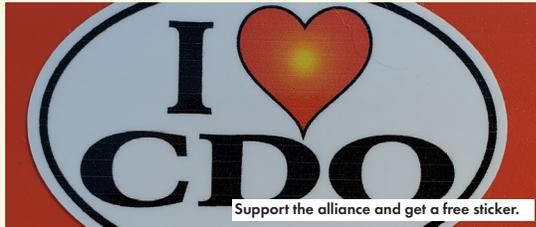
Like us on Facebook:
[Facebook.com/CasadeOroAlliance](https://www.facebook.com/CasadeOroAlliance)

Email Us:
CasadeOroAlliance@gmail.com

Neighborhood Corner



Open Mic Night at the Casa de Oro Library is held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 6 p.m.



**CASA de ORO
ALLIANCE**

**FALL
FESTIVAL**

**SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 9TH
10 A.M. - 3 P.M.**

**SPRING VALLEY ACADEMY
3900 CONRAD DRIVE, SPRING VALLEY**

**GAMES! FOOD TRUCKS!
ENTERTAINMENT! ALCOHOL-FREE!
FREE EVENT! FREE PRIZES!
BRING THIS IN FOR A FREE SPIN!**

CASADEOROALLIANCE.ORG

CO-HOSTED BY:
INSTITUTE FOR
PUBLIC
STRATEGIES

**Free Fun for Everyone!
Fourth Annual Fall Festival**

**Saturday, November 9
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Less than a month away, the Alliance-hosted, fourth annual Fall Festival will be the biggest and best yet! Meet your neighbors at Spring Valley Academy, 3900 Conrad Drive, to enjoy food, entertainment, facts and fun.

Spin the wheel for a chance to win a raffle prize. Peruse the wares of local vendors. Let the kids take a turn on the inflatable obstacle course and paint an ornament. Take their picture by the "How tall this fall?" measuring stick.

Have a cup of coffee, popcorn or a taco and get the latest update on the revitalization of the CDO business corridor. Find out about the new branch library and community recreation center plans.

Entertainment is slated to include the Monte Vista High School band and chorus, a performance by the members of the Young Actors Theater, music by the Spring Valley Academy band, and at 2 p.m., good ol' rock and roll, blues, and jazz music performed by The Blue Groove.

Bring yourself, bring your sweetie, bring the kids, bring grandma, bring the neighbors. There will be fun for everyone!

President's Report Fall 2019

This has been an exciting summer for the Casa De Oro Alliance for several reasons. I am pleased to announce that the county has awarded to Michael Baker International, an engineering and consulting service that does urban planning, a contract to develop a specific plan to update the Casa De Oro business area. The CDO Alliance worked in the past with Michael Baker International and we look forward to a continued productive relationship.

The community will be invited to join the CDO Alliance to work with the consultants and the Valle de Oro Planning Group to develop design guidelines and much-needed zoning regulations within the specific planning process the Baker Group will facilitate. Look to our website calendar for all dates, times and locations of upcoming hearings and future workshops.

We continue to make progress on a new San Diego County Library plan and location. Discussions are underway with county officials, property owners, and local donors. In addition to the library, there is a possibility of building a gymnasium/recreation center, pool and attractive walking path. The La Mesa Spring Valley School District, a principal partner, may offer to lease the required land to the county to create this much needed community resource.

We are calling this project the "Field of Dreams."

On July 23, we received a letter from the IRS approving our 501(c)(3) application. This designation makes donations to the CDO Alliance tax deductible, and allows us to apply for funding grants from many government, corporate, and private sources in order to further our efforts of improving the community.

Last month we hosted our initial CDOA Advisory Council meeting. The names of those who have agreed to serve on this important adjunct to the CDO Alliance are listed on our website.

We now have landscape design plans to redevelop the Kenwood Drive/Campo Road corner. These plans include the county adding a sidewalk and curb from Campo Road to Kenora Drive, scheduled for completion in early 2020.

Our volunteer organization continues to add new members and work toward developing and accomplishing its goals to make Casa de Oro a safer, more vibrant and more attractive community. Come out to one of the community forums listed on our calendar and experience exciting opportunities to get involved. Things get solved when you get involved.

Thank you for your support,
- Bob Yarris

Casa de Oro Alliance General Meeting

Come hear about efforts to improve Casa de Oro.

Date: Nov 21, 2019 at 6 p.m.

Location: Faith Chapel
9400 Campo Road
Spring Valley, CA 91977

CDOA Committees

Beautification & Community Events

To enhance Campo Road corridor, to foster community involvement and to plan and stage community events.

Economic Development & Fundraising

To support and focus on overall economic development of the Casa de Oro business community, encourage involvement of the business community and housing landlords, recognize the achievements of local businesses, and seek funding to support the goals of the Alliance.

Government Affairs

To explore, monitor and report on government regulations, ordinances, and codes that can be introduced or modified to support Casa de Oro revitalization efforts.

Public Information & Outreach

To bring the news and activities of the Casa de Oro Alliance to the public, while actively engaging community members in events and important developments.

Check out our website at CasaDeOroAlliance.org for community resources, upcoming events and more.

Do you have something you would like to share with the community? We want to hear from you. Send us an email at CDOAmedia@gmail.com.

State Route 94/125 Interchange Project Moves Forward

By Cindy Schmidt

The CDO Alliance, along with members of Grossmont Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA) and the Spring Valley, Valley de Oro and Jamul Community Planning Groups, formed the SR 94/125 Interchange Advocacy Coalition to urge the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to complete the last piece of the SR-125, which was built in 1974.

The project has been in many planning documents in the past, but never fully funded. Spring Valley Community Planning Group Chair Liz Lavertu represented the Interchange Advocacy Coalition and gave a well-crafted presentation to SANDAG board members in June. Her fact-filled speech covered all aspects of the reasons this project should not be delayed any longer and resulted in a unanimous vote to get the exit ramp built.

The long-awaited project to connect southbound SR-125 to eastbound SR-94 with a freeway-to-freeway ramp is no longer on the to-do list. It is now officially in the works. Additionally, two auxiliary lanes along southbound SR-125 will be built to ease traffic congestion. Although it is not currently in the plan, an additional northbound lane is also under consideration.

A study in February of 2019 showed that SR-125 carries approximately 83,400 vehicles per day. An average of 20,550 vehicles exit at Spring Street daily, and more than 15,000 of those cars immediately return to the freeway and head east. The new freeway-to-freeway connector will eliminate the need for drivers to do this.

The current plan calls for a lane to exit SR-125 near Panorama Drive and connect to eastbound SR-94 west of Bancroft Drive.

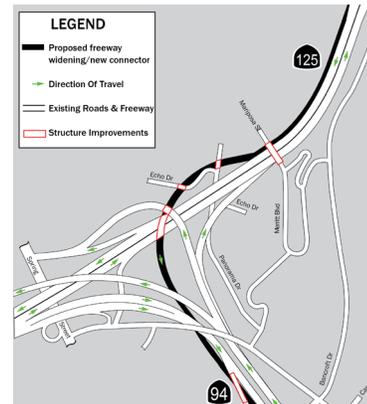
The total project cost is estimated to be \$132 million and will be paid for with a combination of funds from the State Transportation Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) and TransNet funds from SANDAG. Environmental studies were completed in the summer of 2015 at a cost of \$6.8 million.

Project design funding will be provided by the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Currently, preparation of final design plans, acquisition of necessary rights-of-way, movement of utilities and other pre-construction are expected to take about two years.

The design plan must address not just the new section of highway, but the six existing structures and a new bridge that

will be involved. Retaining walls and other construction features will also be necessary to enable traffic to continue moving during the build.

The most optimistic prediction for the completion date for the building of the exit ramp and additional lanes is 2025. When that happens, community members of the CDO Alliance, in partnership with the Interchange Advocacy Coalition, can rightfully take some of the credit for getting this project, which has been on the books for 45 years, finished. Way to go, CDOA!



Keeping It Clean

On the first Saturday morning of every month, Casa de Oro Alliance members do a mini clean up along the Campo Road business corridor. Starting at 8 a.m. and working for only an hour or two, several bags of trash are collected by a dozen or so volunteers wearing bright yellow vests.

If you do not want to go to a meeting and only have a couple of hours of time each month to support your community, join us. Tools are provided. Check the CDO Alliance calendar for the meet-up location, as we clean a different area each month.

On Saturday, October 26, the entire community is invited to assist with a major trash collection effort. Meet at the Casa de Oro Professional Center at 9826 Campo Road at 9 a.m. Bring the kids and have them do a bit of community service before going to their Halloween party. Students wishing to receive community service credit may bring necessary paperwork to be signed.

Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, church groups and friends are invited. Dressing in costume is not just allowed, it's encouraged. Make it fun and help your community look its best. Safety vests, pickers, trash bags and other equipment will be provided. Join us and help keep Casa de Oro clean.