

Ask What's
Possible

SLO Chamber CEO Ermina Karim announces her departure

Rise Above
Self Interest

SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif. —Ermina Karim, President and CEO of the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce since 2011, announced today she plans to leave the Chamber, effective June 29.

Target Amazing

“It has been an absolute privilege to serve the Chamber,” Karim said. “And a difficult decision to make. Ultimately, I want to spend a lot more time with my daughter than I’m able to now and am grateful to be in a position to make that choice.”

Build
Relationships

“I am proud of where the Chamber stands today. Membership retention is high; revenues are growing; our network of indispensable volunteers has never been more robust, and our staff is talented and dedicated. Soon we will have a new Economic Vision and updated strategic plan to guide our organization,” said Karim. “It’s the perfect time for the Chamber to bring in fresh leadership.”

Connect Diverse
Perspectives

“I look forward to remaining in the community, supporting the Chamber from the sidelines and exploring new and different professional opportunities,” said Karim.

Grit to
Achieve What
We Believe In

Geri LaChance, 2018 chair of the Chamber’s Board of Directors and CEO of SESLOC Federal Credit Union, praised Karim’s tenure.

Oh, and We Like
to Have Fun

“For more than 100 years, the Chamber has played a key role in shaping our community, and Ermina continued that tradition of strong leadership,” LaChance said. “Over this last year alone, she has led the development of a new Economic Vision, an ambitious process that has involved engaging leaders from throughout our region to consider the possibilities that will further our economy and community.”

Karim joined the Chamber staff in 2007 as Director of Governmental Affairs; in 2011 she was selected as President and CEO, following the retirement of Dave Garth, who held the position for 39 years.

“Ermina has taken the Chamber to a new level,” LaChance said. “We completely understand her reasons and are fully supportive — on a personal note, I couldn’t be happier for her.”

Under Karim’s leadership, LaChance noted, the Chamber has been an effective advocate for the business community, successfully campaigning for city-wide ballot measures such

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bringing people together to shape the place we love.

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as the Measure G sales tax and the repeal of binding arbitration as well as City Council actions updating its land-use plan and paving the way for substantially more housing to be built in the next decade.

“We will miss Ermina’s energy, determination and wisdom,” LaChance said. “Fortunately, a talented and committed team of staff integral to the Chamber’s accomplishments remains in place and will ensure a smooth transition.”

“I know that the legislative, programmatic and financial strength of the Chamber will attract many outstanding candidates,” LaChance added. “I look forward to identifying the next steward of this 114-year-old organization.”

LaChance said the Board has appointed a search committee, which will begin to meet this month and plans to post a job description in coming weeks. “We have enough lead time to conduct a thorough and rigorous search for her successor.”

ABOUT THE CHAMBER

The San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce is the oldest and largest voluntary organization in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. As an independent nonprofit corporation (not affiliated with government or any other agency), it uniquely serves the needs of its nearly 1,400 members representing more than 33,000 employees in the region.

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