



THE CAUSE

A Newsletter of the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy

Ventura Kicks Off Big Box Ballot Measure



United Food and Commercial Workers Union representative Jim Algers joined by CAUSE Legislative Analyst, Das Williams address Stop Ventura Wal-Mart news conference.

Livable Ventura, the United Food & Commercial Worker's Union (UFCW) and CAUSE have united to ban big box stores that also carry groceries and other non-taxable items in the City of

Ventura. Having written a legally defensible ballot measure, we are hitting the streets this spring to gather the 9,000 signatures necessary to place it on the ballot.

"We're excited," exclaimed Das Williams, CAUSE Legislative Analyst. "After three years of fighting Wal-Mart, we have more volunteers and more supporters than ever before. A few months ago, our proposals were stalled at the City Council level, but now we are going straight to the people of Ventura and getting an enthusiastic response."

Livable Ventura is a grassroots organization of Venturans dedicated to sustainable urban planning, the economic well-being and social equity of the

community. Livable Ventura gets staff support from CAUSE.

"This ballot measure will save Ventura from increased traffic impacts, but also protect good jobs that pay decent wages and benefits across the city," said former grocery worker and Livable Ventura Steering Committee member George Roberts.

Volunteers are needed to gather signatures to qualify the proposal for the ballot. If you can help, come to the CAUSE office any Wednesday morning, 9:30-12noon or e-mail das_williams@hotmail.com to arrange a time.

CAUSE/COAST Lead Regional Transit Campaign

On Saturday March 1, at the Santa Barbara Library, CAUSE, in collaboration with COAST (Coalition for Sustainable Transportation), launched the first in a series of activities in both Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties concerning the need for better regional public transit.

A full house heard from speakers Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks, City Councilman Grant House of Santa Barbara, Paul Dyson, President of RAILPAC, which encourages better passenger rail service, and, Michael Dukakis, former governor of Massachusetts, former vice-president of AMTRAK, and current professor of Public Policy at UCLA. Each speaker discussed the challenges of moving beyond the existing challenges, including



From left to right, Santa Barbara Councilman Grant House, RAILPAC President Paul Dyson, Former Massachusetts Governor, Michael Dukakis, CAUSE Community Planning Director, Carmen Ramirez, and Ventura County Supervisor, Linda Parks.

the lack of a second, separate rail track for passenger rail.

With the realities of increasingly expensive gas, the consequences of pollution and congestion on every person's health and that of the planet, what will it take to get us out of our private ve-

hicles and into better transit options? Governor Dukakis believes that public determination will overcome governmental inertia. And as Supervisor Parks declared, "every journey starts with the first step."

The March 1st transportation forum was one of several actions organized for 2008, marking the recent formation of the Alliance for Sustainable and Equitable Regional Transportation (ASERT), a collaborative campaign initiated by CAUSE and COAST. ASERT is organizing a broad-based regional transportation coalition dedicated to the creation of an integrated regional transportation system, including rail, linking Ventura and Santa Barbara

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Message from the President



As CAUSE's incoming President, I am honored to lead the board of directors of this dynamic and visionary social justice organization. Working in partnership as a CAUSE board and staff, and in collaboration with our many community leaders and sister organizations, we have begun this year energized and focused, as we work to realize our mission to promote economic, environmental and social justice for all people in the Central Coast region.

CAUSE is an organization that believes in our collective potential to create positive change in our society and communities. Guided by such values as interdependence, community, and the common good, CAUSE began 2008 making tremendous progress in our current campaigns. These campaigns include efforts to develop the leadership of immigrant women, to promote smart growth and sustainable communities (by keeping Wal-Mart

from opening another store in the region in-part through a City of Ventura big-box ordinance), and efforts to create a regional Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties transportation system that supports working families and the environment.

As we work to bring about important policy reform through these and other CAUSE campaigns, we are also looking ahead. We have adopted the lens of seven generations as a planning tool for our work for the coming years. Utilizing this Native-American planning concept, in January we kicked off CAUSE's 2008 strategic plan process, with the intent of developing a plan to chart the beginning of this course for the next five years. As we engage many of you in this planning process, we look forward to sharing with the community the final strategic plan later this Fall.

Realization of our current goals and objectives, and those established through our 2008 strategic planning process, depend upon CAUSE's ability to become a significant force for change by virtue

of the unified strength of our community alliances, the ability to expand our research capacity (collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing data on community problems, such as poverty, public transit equity and health access) and the power to develop a dual track of giving by building on CAUSE's success among our foundation partners and expanding our support from local individual donors.

I want to extend a great deal of thanks to Pamela Meidell, my immediate predecessor as President, for being an excellent leader and an inspiration to me. I am honored to be following her lead at the helm of the board at this point in CAUSE history. I thereby commit to carrying out the spirit and vision of the CAUSE board, staff, and supporters as we move forward into the 21st century.

Si se puede!

Gregory Freeland, Ph. D.
President of the Board

Regional Transit Campaign

continued from front page

Counties, and significant expansion of the region's bus system.

Upcoming actions include an Oxnard transportation forum on May 10 with Assembly member and Chair of the Assembly Transportation Commission, Pedro Nava, at Ruby's Café of Oxnard. Other upcoming activities include a January 2009 regional transportation summit, which is projected to bring together over 2,000 community members and elected officials, with the primary purpose of building the grassroots constituents needed to expand regional transit.

For more on the May 10th forum and other ASERT activities contact Carmen Ramirez at (805) 658-0810 ext. 213, or at ramirezmc@gmail.com.

Funding Social Change

Recognizing the need for a strong base of donors in support of grassroots social change in Ventura County, in 2004 CAUSE initiated the development of what has become the Social Justice Fund for Ventura County (SJF). With active leadership from local leaders like the former Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF) President and CAUSE Advisory Committee member, Kate McLean, the effort has successfully brought together CAUSE, the VCCF, several California-based foundation partners and over 65 local donors.

Guided by a "Giving Circle" of community donors and hosted by the VCCF, the SJF's mission is to strengthen social justice in Ventura County by providing financial grants and other support to grassroots groups working toward systemic change.

Over the past three years an ever-expanding group of local residents has researched, planned, organized and tested this innovative experiment for increasing local resources to support progressive community change. In May 2007, the group completed an 18-month pilot to test the SJF concept and build momentum for its development.

Fifty donors actively participated in the first SJF Giving Circle, resulting in grants totaling \$50,000, going to seven grassroots organizations engaged in community organizing and social advocacy.

For more information on the SJF, including how to become a donor and 2008 grant application process, contact Hoa Tran at htran@vccf.org, or (805) 988-0196 ext. 121.

Women's Conference Attendees Call for Action

CAUSE celebrated International Women's Day on Saturday March 8th by organizing the 6th Annual Women's Social, Economic and Environmental (SEE) Justice Regional Conference. Women from Fillmore, Santa Paula, Oxnard, Santa Maria, and Santa Barbara came together to learn and take action on important SEE justice issues facing them, their families and communities. Six workshops in Spanish and English were presented on the following issues: 1) Immigration Rights and Action, 2) Pesticides and Halaco Super Fund Site, 3) Voting Power 2008, 4) Higher Education for Immigrants, 5) Expanding Childcare Access, and 6) Women's Power. Local grassroots women took the lead in presenting the workshop on voting power. The conference culminated with the women participants exercising their leadership capacity by presenting a summary of the issues and upcoming actions to all the conference participants.

The 2008 Keynote Speaker was Mary Gonzales, Director of Gamaliel Foundation's Western territory. Mrs. Gonzales delivered an exhilarating speech on self determination and organized power and cited real-life organized victories from getting schools built in Chicago



From left to right, Community leader, Sharon Hilbrant, AARP Associate State Director, Adriana Mendoza, CAUSE Associate Executive Director, Maricela Morales, CAUSE youth leader, Erica Fernandez, Congresswoman Lois Capps, and Oxnard College EOPS Director, Ana Maria Valle.

to stopping LNG in South Oxnard. At age 67, Mary Gonzales trains grassroots leaders throughout the U.S. and in South Africa. Congresswoman Lois Capps inspired participants with first hand reports about women's leadership at the international level on such issues as the special impact and role of women on global climate change.

Following the success of the Women SEE Justice Conference, women are motivated to participate in the CAUSE

Centro Mujer Leadership Development Training (LDT) series.

Participants will be organizing house meetings on the Halaco Super Fund Site Campaign and the current pesticide issue in Ventura County. Women also signed up to work on a local resolution that calls for comprehensive immigration reform and the repeal of Operation Endgame.

The 2008 CAUSE Women SEE Justice Regional Conference would not have been possible without the co-sponsorship of Oxnard College EOPS/CARE and the collaboration of the Santa Paula Family Resource Center, Poder Popular South Oxnard, PUEBLO, MUJER and Oxnard College MEChA. A very special thank you to CSUCI Mini-Corp teachers-in-training who provided educational activities throughout the day to about 100 children ages 3-13. CAUSE also thanks financial sponsors including AARP, UCSB Women's Center, AAUW Lompoc-Vandenberg, VC Central Democratic Committee, Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee, Nat'l Women's Political Caucus VC, SB Commission for Women, Ventura Unitarian Universalist Social Action Committee, and Budget Business Clothes and Workshops.

CAUSE presents **CAUSE**
PERLA Batalla
 with special guest **STAR**
Gospel Choir
SATURDAY
May 10, 2008 • 7 p.m.
 Benefits Central Coast Alliance
 United for a Sustainable Economy
\$25 General Admission
Tickets & Information
(805)-658-0810.
 Purchase tickets online at
www.coastalalliance.com

Logos for sponsors: Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy, STAR, Community West Bank, LOCAL 721, SEIU, LIMONEIRA COMPANY, AMERICAN EXPRESS, Discover, MasterCard, VISA.

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May 2008

**Regional Transportation
Forum Featuring Assembly
member Pedro Nava.**

Saturday, May 10, 2- 3:30 PM
Ruby's Café of Oxnard,
348 S. Oxnard Blvd., Oxnard
93030.

For more information contact
CAUSE Community Planning
Director, Carmen Ramirez at
(805) 658-0810 ext. 213, or
ramirezcar@gmail.com



**Sixth Annual CAUSE
Mother's Day Weekend
Justice Concert
Featuring Perla Batalla**

Saturday, May 10 –7 PM
Center for Spiritual Living
(formerly the Church of
Religious Science),
101 S. Laurel St., Ventura, CA.
For ticket information contact
Carole Power, at (805) 658-
0810 ext. 211, or carole@coastalalliance.com

Blessing of the Ocean

Sunday, May 18
Ventura Harbor
For more information, contact
CAUSE Senior Community
Organizer, Beatriz Garcia, at
(805)487-8984 x 11,
or beatriz@coastalalliance.com

July 2008

**Gamaliel National
Leadership Training**

July 13 – 19
California State University at
Channel Islands
For more information, contact
CAUSE Senior Community
Organizer, Beatriz Garcia,
at (805)487-8984 x 11,
or beatriz@coastalalliance.com

September 2008

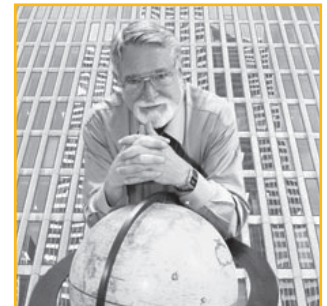
**CAUSE Community Building
Luncheon**

Friday, Sept. 12
Residence Inn by Marriott
Oxnard River Ridge
Keynote speaker, David C.
Korten, best selling author of
The Great Turning and When
Corporations Rule the World.

For more information contact
Carole Power, at (805) 658-
0810 ext. 211, or at carole@coastalalliance.com

**Central Coast Organizing
Project Public Meeting**

Sunday, Sept. 28
(location TBD).
For more information contact
CAUSE Senior Community
Organizer, Beatriz Garcia
at (805)487-8984 x 11, or
beatriz@coastalalliance.com



David C. Korten

Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy

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