

**Chairs' Persons of the Year Awards:**

***Redwood City (Selected by Chair Mario Rendon):***

**Manuel Martinez, Chef & Owner, LV Mar & La Viga restaurants**

Small businesses and restaurants have been battered by COVID-19. Small family owned restaurants don't have the benefit of a large corporate owner to tide them through closed indoor dining and reduced hours. And at the same time, restaurants' role in our county – as an essential service – was highlighted through programs like Great Plates Delivered, which helped vulnerable populations and provided a revenue stream to keep restaurants alive.

For me, Chef Manuel represents the countless small business and restaurant owners who are the life-blood of our communities that continue to press forward. This award to Chef Manuel is also an acknowledgement of this sector's importance, and the role restaurants play in creating and encouraging community – providing a place to gather and celebrate.

As a board member, Chef Manuel has always been present and participated. Even with our noon meetings, during some of the busiest times at his restaurants, he attends and contributes insightful thoughts from a small business perspective. He opens his doors to host the Chamber Board meetings, shutting LV Mar down in the process. Even though the Chamber is paying him, I'm sure he is losing business given the space and time we use. To me that is indicative of his welcoming and collaborative nature, the value he places on the Chamber and the importance of building community.

When COVID-19 hit in early 2020, he was in the process of opening up a third restaurant, San Agus. Given evolving conditions, it would have been completely understandable if he opted not to move forward, but he kept going. Google "San Agus Reviews" and you will find that Chef Manuel has another culinary hit added to his growing portfolio.

This innovation, perseverance and risk-taking defines what it means to be a small business owner. The spirit of entrepreneurship is alive and well in Chef Manuel, and is precisely the type of business leader that needs to be recognized. He is quiet and unassuming, a listener, but in his actions we see Chef Manuel's courage. We are fortunate to have him and we are so proud of him!

**San Carlos (Selected by Chair Jason Mansfield):**  
*Wendy Schettino, Former COO, San Carlos Chamber of Commerce*  
**Program Coordinator, Chamber San Mateo County**

Wendy Schettino joined the San Carlos Chamber staff in 2005 and has been instrumental in successful operation of:

1. Regular Farmer's Markets
2. Annual Art and Wine Fairs
3. Frequent Mixers
4. Multiple Wine Strolls
5. Annual State of the City
6. Annual Recognition Gala

At the San Carlos Chamber, Wendy was in charge of multiple staff, ensuring value for the membership, and was responsible for all the small details of running the business. Even once COVID changed the business landscape, Wendy persevered helping to implement an online auction and finally to transition the membership to the Chamber San Mateo County. She continues to the very end with all the little details of closing down the San Carlos Chamber.

Prior to joining the San Carlos Chamber, Wendy worked in bank marketing after college through the early 2000s. Then she attended the SF Culinary Academy, and shortly thereafter joined the Chamber.

Now, at the Chamber San Mateo County, Wendy was able to restart the San Carlos Farmer's Market. She continues to ensure value to the membership. We all look forward to how she will bring us together once we can all meet again face-to-face.

We recognize that all the success at the San Carlos Chamber of Commerce was because of Wendy's dedication and passion for serving the community. And, we are all very grateful for that.