

**TOWN OF VALDESE
TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL JOINT DINNER MEETING WITH VALDESE MERCHANTS
NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met jointly with the Valdese Merchants for the Annual Dinner Meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., at the Old Rock School, Waldensian Room.

The following were present: Mayor Charles Watts, Councilwoman Rexanna Lowman, and Councilman Paul Mears. Also present were Town Clerk Jessica Lail and Community Affairs Director Morrissa Angi.

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Frances Hildebran, Councilman Tim Barus, Councilman Tim Skidmore, Town Manager Seth Eckard, and Assistant Town Manager/CFO Bo Weichel

A quorum was not present; however, no action was planned.

At 6:30 p.m., Mayor Watts called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Mayor Watts expressed his appreciation for the Valdese Merchants. Rev. Dr. Josh Lail, Pastor of Valdese First Baptist Church, offered the invocation.

RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS OF THE VALDESE TOWN COUNCIL: Mayor Watts introduced our current Council present, Councilman Paul Mears and Councilwoman Rexanna Lowman. Mayor Watts also introduced the Council Elect, Glenn Harvey – Ward 1, Gary Ogle – Ward 4, and Heather Ward – Ward 5.

MERCHANT INTRODUCTIONS: Mayor Watts asked the Merchants present to introduce themselves and explain what they do. There were approximately 30 Merchants in attendance.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS MERCHANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: Community Affairs Director Morrissa Angi reviewed the following handout, which offers ways for the Community Affairs Department to help support the Merchants, for free.

The Town of Valdese Community Affairs Department offers a variety of ways to market your business, showcase your events and partner with the Town for special projects. Below you will see a variety of ways to promote your business and get support completely for FREE. The Town of Valdese Community Affairs Department will be happy to help offer advice for the best ways to get involved with the community.

Advertising opportunities FREE for business owners:

- *E-Newsletter*

This electronic newsletter is sent to over 6,000 subscribers each month. Businesses can send any image they wish to include. This can be as simple as a business card or as elaborate as an event flyer. Look for email invites or see notification on the Downtown Valdese Businesses Facebook Page.

Email Campaign average open rate = 17-28% - Our open rate is 36%

- *Website Listing*

The Town of Valdese has 2 websites. One for government information and one for tourism. On the tourism site, visitvaldese.com you will find listings for businesses of all sorts downtown. Search for your business – if it needs edits, new images, links etc. please let us know. If your business is not listed, we will be happy to add it.

The visitvaldese.com site receives on average 2,000+ views per week. In peak event times, such as the Waldensian Festival, as many as 9,000+.

- *Business Spotlight*

The Town of Valdese has a large following on Facebook of 17,500+. The Community Affairs Office posts weekly “Business Spotlights” features. These features showcase businesses in Valdese – what they offer and where they are located.

The average feature receives the following scores: Engagement 180+ & Post Reach 2,668+

- *Social Media Groups*

What is there to do in Valdese? – Facebook Group – Anyone can post events happening in Valdese.

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Downtown Valdese Businesses – Use this group to share issues between business owners. Announcements are also shared here such as road closures, event dates, and invitations.

- *Event Collaboration*

The Community Affairs Office enjoys partnering with local businesses for special events. If you have an idea to promote your business with, contact us. Examples of current collaborations include – Furrocious Pet Costume Contest with Barkside Pet Grooming, Grateful Gobbler Coloring Contest with Farris Insurance, and Rock N’ Bowl with Valdese Rec & WSVM.

Contacts for building issues and improvements:

- Façade Grants – townofvaldese.com – Valdese Main Street Program - \$2,500 match program for building façade improvements – lighting, awnings, windows, doors, signage.
Contact: Morrissa Angi – mangi@valdesenc.gov – 828-874-6773
- Inspections – Safety Concerns
Contact: Valdese Fire Marshal – Levi Henry – lhenry@valdesenc.gov – 828-879-2111

Contacts for concerns, complaints, suggestions:

Mayor, Charlie Watts – mayor@valdesenc.gov – 828-879-2125

Town Council – Contact Information at townofvaldese.com

Town Manager, Seth Eckard – seckard@valdesenc.gov – 828-879-2116

Where can you find updates?

Website: visitvaldese.com | townofvaldese.com

Social: Facebook.com/valdesenc | Instagram.com/valdesenc

Monthly E-Newsletter: signup at townofvaldese.com

Emergency Updates: CodeRED – signup at townofvaldese.com

Mailing: Signup for mailed newsletters – quarterly & by special announcement – Inserted in water bills

Mayor Watts invited everyone to enjoy dinner that was catered by Timberwoods.

At 7:37 p.m., Mayor Watts adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is a regularly scheduled Council Meeting on Monday, December 4, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

Town Clerk

Mayor

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