

POLICY WATCH – April 2023

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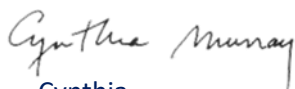
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April's big event is Earth Day. At NBLC, we are part of a coalition of organizations that are working to address climate change and ensure that employers are part of the solution. We appreciate the shift from climate doomerism to climate optimism, while realizing that there is much to be done. In this issue, we share a link to a survey from the Regional Climate Protection Agency who is seeking public input on what measures should be taken to enhance climate adaptation in Sonoma County as they investigate putting a sales tax measure on the ballot to fund these measures. Please take the survey!

We also urge you to join us in celebrating the leaders among us who we are honoring this year on May 12th at the Leaders of the North Bay Awards luncheon. We have a very impressive group of leaders that will inspire you! And to add to the event, we are introducing you to Mahalia Morgan, our teen speech contest winner, who will present her activism on equity in education.

Best,



Cynthia

What Are People Willing to Do to Fight Climate Change?

In April, we celebrate Earth Day and try to focus attention on the biggest challenge of our planet. There is no doubt that global warming and climate change are increasingly impacting every facet of our lives. We feel the extreme weather and endure the damage we are subjected to from storms, floods, fires, drought and heat. As taxpayers, we see the costs to recover from these events continue to grow as there are more and more disasters. We have been lectured, cajoled, sweet talked, taxed and begged to change our behavior to slow down global warming and make the changes needed to prevent catastrophe. And yet. And yet we are not seeing the changes made, at least not to the degree needed and within the timeframe identified.

Why? Why are people not acting in their own best interest and preserving a future for their children? We examine some of the reasons in [New Survey Asks Americans How They Really Feel About Climate Change](#), by Vanessa Bates Ramirez ([Link](#)). Ramirez says, "A survey carried out by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC) and The Associated Press–NORC Center for Public Affairs Research aimed to find out how Americans really feel about climate change. In a nutshell, here's what the survey found:

Americans believe climate change is happening, but they're not terribly worried about it, and are mostly not willing to spend money or go out of their way to help fix it."

Rameriz says, "74 percent of the survey respondents said they believe climate change is real. However, less than half—49 percent—believe it's being caused by human activities (as opposed to natural changes in the environment). That 49 percent is down from 60 percent the last time this survey was carried out, in 2018. The change in viewpoint was uniform across education levels, from college graduates to those who stopped studying after high school. However, more people in the 18 to 29 age group changed their view than did those aged 60 or older."

Change in Belief in Human-Driven Climate Change, 2018-2023

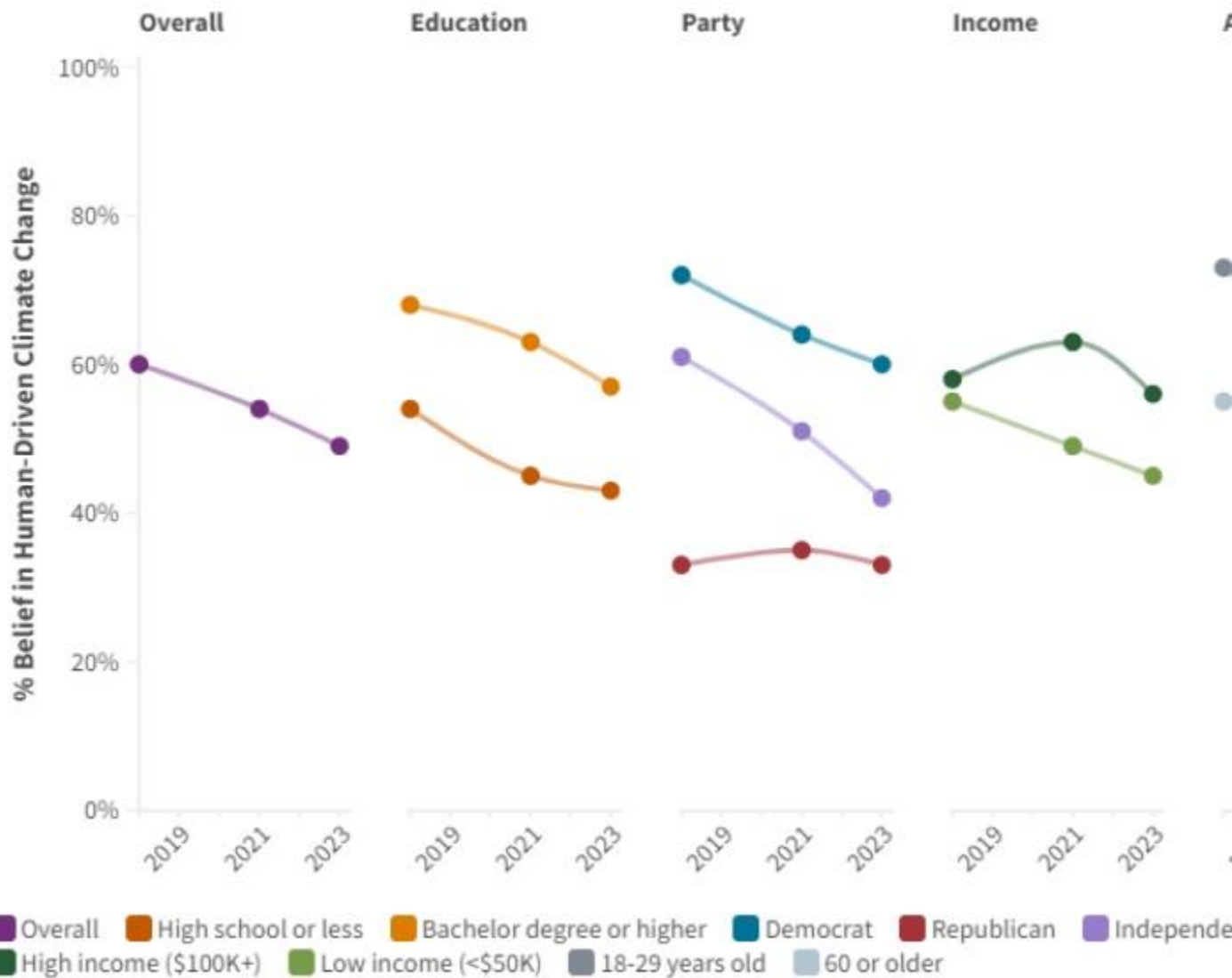


Image Credit: Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC)

The survey found that "In terms of actually taking action, more than half of respondents said they're already trying to reduce their energy consumption (though this is likely as much of an effort to keep energy

bills down as it is to help the environment). Some ways people are doing so is by using energy-efficient appliances (68 percent), turning off unnecessary lights (89 percent), using less paper and plastic (58 percent), eating less meat (37 percent), and using less heat and air conditioning (60 percent). These are relatively easy, low-cost actions that most anyone can take.”

Rameriz says, “Fewer people are opting in to pricier climate-friendly actions, like putting solar panels on their home (11 percent), buying an electric or hybrid vehicle (12 percent), or getting electricity through a supplier that uses renewable sources (25 percent).”

What’s revealing is that costs are a deterrent for behavior change. Rameriz says, “It seems that much of Americans’ willingness to help combat climate change comes down to economics. Almost two-thirds of those surveyed said they weren’t willing to pay any amount of money to combat climate change—not even a \$1 carbon fee a month. 38 percent would pay \$1 a month, and 21 percent would pay \$100 a month.” People are not willing to pay even \$1 a month!

Willingness to Pay for a Carbon Fee Over time

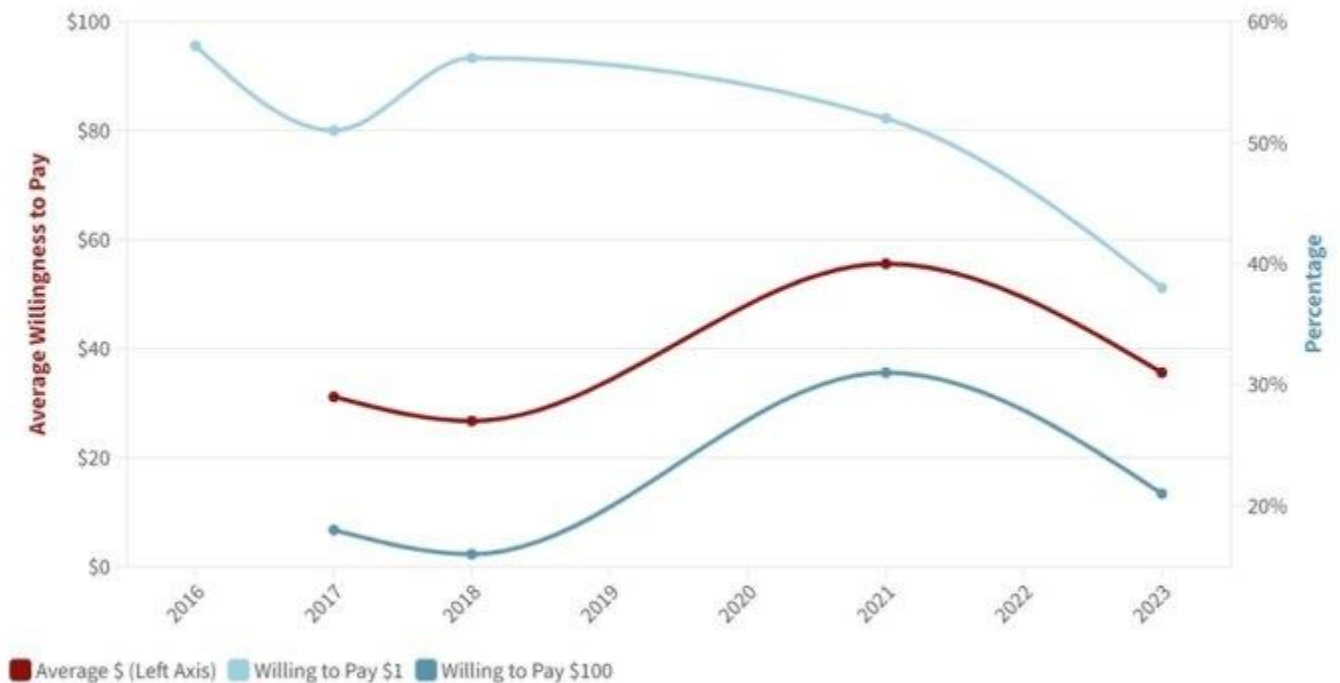


Image Credit: Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC)

“How much people are willing to pay is likely more a function of their disposable income than of their concern over the environment,” says Rameriz. “However, peoples’ willingness to shell out any amount of money, whether \$1 or \$100, decreased about 10 percent between 2021 and the present. This is likely because of the financial squeeze put on so many people by the pandemic and rising inflation; when you’re worried about making rent or buying groceries, helping the planet isn’t going to be high on your list.”

“It’s striking that Americans’ willingness to pay even a \$1 monthly fee to combat climate change fell to below half of respondents—the lowest level since we began tracking this data,” said Michael Greenstone, director of EPIC and an economics professor at the University of Chicago. “Americans’ willingness to pay

for climate policy is far below what research projects climate change will cost society per ton of CO2 emissions.”

Rameriz says, “Similarly, 41 percent of people said they would buy an electric vehicle—if the long-term savings on gas and maintenance added up to more than the higher up-front cost of the car (cost was the biggest barrier to buying an EV). Those most likely to buy one are under 45 years old, live on the west coast in urban areas, and have high incomes. Unsurprisingly, people don’t want to be pushed into buying electric cars; just 35 percent support stricter fuel efficiency standards to encourage EV sales, and 27 percent are in favor of requiring new car sales to be electric or hybrid by 2035.”

The Regional Climate Protection Agency of Sonoma County is looking into placing a tax ballot measure to pay for the costs needed to facilitate climate adaptation. That initiative is:

The Climate Protection Initiative effort aims to foster community-based efforts to engage climate experts, residents, and organizations in developing recommendations to the RCPA Board for an expenditure plan supporting a potential climate revenue measure in 2024. To successfully secure voter approval for the climate revenue measure, RCPA recognizes that it needs to gather input from community members representing the diversity of Sonoma County. The RCPA Board will use the recommendations from the Climate Protection Initiative Committees and inputs from other stakeholders to decide on the contents of the final expenditure plan.

They are seeking public input on the initiative and have a survey that you can take: <https://scta-rcpa.typeform.com/to/HEJT10WK>

It will be interesting to see whether the Sonoma County voters align with the national survey results or are more supportive.

In the meantime, Rameriz says, “It seems we’re likely to find ourselves in a bit of a pickle in coming years. Despite believing in climate change, most Americans aren’t up for throwing much money at it. This must be partly due to the tough economic times we’re in; inflation and interest rates have soared, and whispers of an impending recession have been circulating for months.”

She adds, “But it’s also a sign that even once the economy improves and people feel more secure in their finances, real progress likely won’t be made without significant government intervention—that is, subsidies, regulation, and incentives. These need to be carefully balanced with practical concerns and realism, which can be a tall order.”

Enough of the Climate Doomerism!

Another challenge is the feeling some people have that all is lost. We’ve past the point of no return and we are doomed. That kind of thinking makes people less likely to make change and to avoid taking the steps that will help address climate change. In [We May Not Stop The Climate Crisis. That Doesn’t Mean We Shouldn’t Try](#), by Brian Kateman ([Link](#)) the author says we have more reason for hope now and we need to dispel the doomsayers. Kateman says, “If your personal anxiety about the climate has softened a bit in recent times, you’re not alone. After decades of increasingly alarming reporting on climate change and the environment, fatalistic headlines are beginning to give way to ones that express a different kind of feeling, one that many of us haven’t felt in a long time: hope.”

“The recent shift in the media narrative has been shaped by two ongoing conversations,” says Kateman. “First, scientists and reporters are trying to fine-tune a message that most accurately represents the evidence. Second, some reporters are wondering about the impact of their message on public attitudes towards change. Luckily, it seems to me that the most realistic interpretation of the evidence and the optimal message to motivate change are one and the same: We can make a difference, but there’s a significant chance that we won’t.”

He says, “To observe the shifting media narrative, take last month’s report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for example: Some outlets reported on it in the usual, panic-stricken way; The Guardian, for example, titled its article, ‘Scientists deliver ‘final warning’ on climate crisis: act now or it’s too late.’ But Time Magazine took a more positive tone: ‘The New U.N. Climate Report Has Arrived. Resist the Urge to Despair.’ The author describes his own newfound hope. “‘Like many scientists,’ he writes, ‘was disheartened for decades, but today’s report makes me feel more inspired than ever.’”

“Indeed, there’s been a rising tide of ‘climate optimism’ as journalists attempt to walk back some of the most alarmist warnings from recent decades” says Kateman. “In an opinion piece for CNN, Fermilab scientist Don Lincoln relays the success story of how ‘humanity and all life on Earth dodged a bullet’ by phasing out chlorofluorocarbons and other ozone-depleting substances with the UN’s Montreal Protocol passed in 1987.”

“As a result of the Montreal Protocol, Lincoln reports, the ozone layer is now ‘on track to recover in the coming decades.’ This, he says, offers hope that society may be able to intervene in some of the other causes of climate change. More recently, Reuters published an op-ed by strategists Johan Falk and Owen Gaffney of the Exponential Roadmap Initiative. They describe the latest report from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) — the same one The Guardian called a ‘final warning’ — as ‘remarkably positive’ because it indicates that it’s still technically possible for global society to stabilize the rise in climate at 1.5oC, despite the caveat that governments are ‘way, way off target’ in their efforts to meet this goal. Writing for Vox’s ‘Against Doomerism’ project, Hannah Ritchie carefully advocates for a certain kind of climate optimism, one that leads to action rather than complacency,” says Kateman.

“‘Climate optimism’ is a notable shift, and it may be a sensible response to the wave of climate ‘doomerism’ we’ve been experiencing in recent years,” says Kateman. “As environmental journalist Elizabeth Kolbert pointed out in an extensive feature for New York Magazine late last year, ‘a diet of bad news leads to paralysis, which yields yet more bad news.’ She’s not wrong; many self-identified climate doomers lament that activism feels futile in the face of certain catastrophe. If we truly don’t believe there’s anything we can do, either as individuals or collectively, we’re unlikely to try.”

Kateman warns, “Of course, optimism carries its own set of risks. By this point it’s clear that denying global warming altogether, or even downplaying its severity, has only allowed the problem to grow. Meanwhile, we’ve seen climate denying politicians elected to the highest offices as planet-threatening human activities continue to expand. An overly positive outlook, just like an overly negative one, could halt our progress.”

“In addition to reducing our much-needed sense of urgency, an over-optimistic view could lead us to make some pretty dangerous gambles, all because we gravely misunderstood the odds. In addition to avoiding both over-optimistic complacency and over-pessimistic defeatism, we need to be realistic. Accurately understanding the most likely future of our planet is essential for both institutional and individual decision-making. Should we, as Elon Musk believes, have lots of children to avoid a purported ‘underpopulation

crisis?’ It seems to me that this hinges on whether there will be a planet for them and others to comfortably live on in fifty years.”

Kateman points out, “Unwarranted, unqualified optimism feels like a form of toxic positivity. Scary feelings are met with empty assurances, rather than addressing the problem directly. In my work, I often speak to food and environmental advocates who feel like they’re surrounded by cheerleaders while the world literally burns around them. They’re told to keep a positive outlook, sometimes by the very same governments that are actively making choices that endanger the planet. This unrelenting feel-goodism denies reality and undermines the importance and urgency of their work. Unrealistic positivity about the state of the climate, as some have pointed out, is essentially a form of gaslighting.”

“The fight against climate change isn’t an all-or-nothing battle. There are at least some ways we can make meaningful changes that positively affect the lives of humans and other animals,” says Kateman. “Some progress is always better than none, and if we can delay or reduce coming disasters, we absolutely should. We can’t give up, but we don’t need to kid ourselves into believing we’ve already won. Few activists have ever proclaimed that their respective causes—racism, sexism, and so on—would ever completely resolve. But even problems that initially seem overwhelming and insurmountable may be able to be managed until better solutions emerge.”

Kateman ends with this observation. “An estimated 3,664,292 babies were born in the U.S. in 2021 alone. We owe it to them to do everything in our power to keep the planet comfortably habitable for the duration of their natural lives, at the very least. Humans and many other species may eventually go extinct as a result of industrial activity. But that’s no excuse not to do everything we can to make life a little more livable for future generations. No matter what happens, we will be glad that we tried.”

New Research: Women More Effective than Men in All Leadership Measures

Perhaps if we want to see more done about climate change, we need more women to tackle the problem. In [New Research: Women More Effective Than Men In All Leadership Measures](#) by Kevin Kruse, ([Link](#)), we learn, “In 2023, for the first time in history, women CEOs lead about 10% of Fortune 500 companies. This is undoubtedly an important milestone. But it also underscores the need for more women at all levels of leadership.”

Kruse says, “And this is not just about representation. Women leaders are good for business” Below are excerpts from the article:

- The Ready-Now Leaders report from the Conference Board shows that organizations with at least 30% women in leadership roles are 12x more likely to be in the top 20% for financial performance.
- Research from Leadership Circle, based on assessments with over 84,000+ leaders and 1.5 million raters (comprising boss, boss’s boss, peers, direct reports, and others), shows that female leaders show up more effectively than their male counterparts across every management level and age level.”

Creating a pipeline for women leaders is a business issue. IBM’s report this year states that “Women remain acutely underrepresented in the middle management tiers, jeopardizing prospects for a healthy pipeline of future women leaders.” So, how can you best develop a pipeline of female leaders to drive equitability and bottom-line results?

First, it helps to understand what exactly makes women more effective leaders. And who could better break down the research than Cindy Adams, President and CLO at Leadership Circle? “Creative leaders’ behaviors flow from their values and purpose,” Adams said, “rather than from a set of assumptions about how leaders are supposed to behave.” Creative Competencies are highly researched and validated effective leadership competencies around the world. These include competencies that scale across five dimensions:

- Relating
- Self-awareness
- Authenticity
- Systems Awareness
- Achieving

Reactive Tendencies, on the other hand, are tendencies that “got us here, but won’t get us there,” Adams said. “The reactive structure of ‘beliefs and assumptions’ are designed to keep us safe or to protect a sense of worth. But, they contain self-limiting beliefs and behaviors that hold leaders back from achieving their full potential.” Reactive leaders rely heavily on early life scripts of what leaders are supposed to do and say, which often leads to autocratic micromanaging. The three reactive dimensions include:

- Complying
- Protecting
- Controlling

Based on Leadership Circle’s growing database of more than 240,000 complete leadership profiles, Adams highlighted three key advantages that research indicates contribute to female leaders being more effective than male leaders.

1. Women score significantly higher on all five Creative Dimensions: Women leaders score significantly higher in their capability to “connect and relate to others,” as well as in the Authenticity and Systems Awareness competencies. This suggests that women leaders are not only better at building relationships but also that the relationships they build are characterized by authenticity and an awareness of how they contribute to “the greater good beyond the leader’s immediate sphere of influence.”
2. Women are more likely to lead from a Creative mindset and “play for all to win”: Adams wrote, “Female leaders more often lead from a ‘playing to win’ orientation—focusing on their natural curiosities about what matters most to the future they are creating and partnering with others to move toward that vision. Male leaders can and do also lead from this orientation, but they are just as likely to lead from a ‘play not to lose’ orientation and may spend as much time moving away from what they don’t want as moving toward what they do.”
3. Women build and cultivate stronger connections: Adams said, “Female leaders show up in a noticeably different way than male leaders in terms of building caring connections, mentoring and developing others, and exhibiting concern for the community. In today’s business environment, this acts as a superpower.”

“In a nutshell,” Adams said, “female leaders demonstrate higher levels of leadership effectiveness and higher levels of Creative competency (in all dimensions), and they demonstrate lower Reactive impact compared to their male counterparts.”

Despite all the measurable benefits female leaders bring to organizations, many still do not effectively develop and support them. To harness the feminine leadership advantage, Adams points out that simply hiring more women isn’t enough. “Diversity in leadership ranks is proven to have a strategic advantage,” Adams emphasized. “It’s important to not only hire and promote female leaders but to encourage their development early and to help them gain as much business experience and knowledge as they can in roles that may still be male-dominated.”

No matter the design, content, or length of a leadership development program, Adams says it’s crucial to start early—for the benefit of future women leaders and the organization at large. “Women, in particular, make that shift from ‘less effective’ to ‘more effective’ sooner than men,” says Adams. “If we start building more diverse teams and organizations now, businesses will be better for it, and the world will be better for it today and ten years from now.”

Don’t Miss the Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon on May 12th – Get Your Tickets Today!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-leaders-of-the-north-bay-awards-luncheon-tickets-607656947287>

Members in the News

Midstate Construction’s North Bay Construction Corps Highlight

Midstate Construction Corporation is thrilled to collaborate with the North Coast Builders Exchange (NCBE) and support the North Bay Construction Corps (NBCC) program, aimed at developing the next generation of construction workers.

Redwood Credit Union Wins Industry Marketing Awards

Redwood Credit Union recently received two Diamond Awards at the annual Credit Union National Association (CUNA) Marketing & Business Development Council conference.

Marin Assemblyman’s Bill Calls for Third Westbound Lane on Richmond Bridge

“North Bay Leadership Council employers need barriers removed to help us attract workers from the East Bay to work in Marin and Sonoma Counties, many of whom are essential workers which are in short supply in the North Bay,” wrote Cynthia Murray, the executive director of the North Bay Leadership Council, in an email.

Santa Rosa Junior College’s Incoming President, Maria Angélica Garcia

Santa Rosa Junior College’s next president, Maria Angélica Garcia, who was chosen after a nationwide search, has big dreams for the students and community as a whole.

Redwood Credit Union Encourages Young Savers to “Unleash the Power of Saving” Throughout April

Redwood Credit Union is celebrating Credit Union Youth Month in April, along with credit unions across the United States.

Kaiser Permanente's Santa Rosa Medical Facility Becomes 1st in US to Achieve Net-Zero Energy

A Kaiser Permanente office in Santa Rosa has become the first net-zero health care facility in the U.S., according to the Department of Energy, which means it produces enough renewable energy to meet its own annual consumption without emitting greenhouse gases.

North Bay Business Journal Editor Departs, Ready For The Next Chapter

After seven years with NBBJ and a storied journalism career of almost a half-century, Borders, 70, is leaving the business publication — with a wide-open path before him.

Exchange Bank's Kelly Obremski Selected as One of 2023's North Bay Business Journal's Forty under 40
Congratulations Kelly for this wonderful honor and thank you for all of your hardwork!

Keysight Technologies Helping Close Engineering Gender Gap

Santa Rosa-based company Keysight Technologies hopes to help close the gender gap in engineering with its annual Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day, held Saturday at its Fountaingrove Parkway headquarters.



Over thirty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org