

Housing Our Agricultural Workforce

An annual event to support affordable housing in Ventura County.

Thursday, September 21, 2017

VENTURA COUNTY
HOUSING TRUST FUND



HECTOR LUJAN

CEO, REITER AFFILIATED COMPANIES

Keynote Speaker

Hector Lujan is CEO of Reiter Affiliated Companies (RAC), the largest fresh multi-berry producer in the world, growing Driscoll's proprietary varieties of strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries year round in the United States, Baja California, Central Mexico, Portugal, Morocco and Peru.

Prior to joining RAC, Hector worked for Bionova Fresh a subsidiary of Grupo Pulsar as Operations Manager in their farming and marketing operations. Hector is a graduate of the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, México with a degree in Business Administration.



Hector first joined RAC in July 2002 as Vice President of Central Mexico Operations for BerryMex, an international affiliate. Over time, Hector's leadership increased to include additional responsibilities throughout Mexico and the U.S. By August 2011 he relocated to work out of RAC's corporate office in Oxnard, establishing his residency in Southern California. In January 2017, Hector became CEO as Garland Reiter transitioned into the role of Executive Chairman.

REITER: The Reiter family began farming in the San Francisco Bay Peninsula and by the turn of the century migrating into Watsonville/Santa Clara Valley where Joseph "Ed" Reiter and R.O "Dick" Driscoll began growing their own Sweetbriar strawberry variety, marketing as Driscoll Strawberry Associates label after World War II.

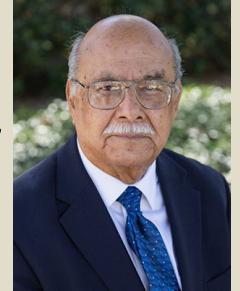
Ed's son Joseph continued to charter new agricultural territories and by the late 1970's, grandsons Garland and Miles Reiter and expanded operations and new varieties into So. California where the headquarters is today. The company's values of Honesty, Fairness and Respect have resulted in the organization's position as an industry leader, adopting health and wellness programs, opening primary health clinics and partnering with local organizations to improve the quality of life for the farmworker community.

JOE MENDOZA

VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Local & Personal Perspective

Joe Mendoza is a 60-year veteran of education who has championed the often-neglected population of migrant, homeless, foster, incarcerated, teen parents, and other at-risk children. Mendoza has helped generations of students in special circumstances through his early work as a teacher, administrator and in his current role as VCOE's Director of Special Populations Educational Support Department.



Mendoza works closely with migrant parents showing parents how to help their children succeed in school and go onto college. "The groups I work with are in poverty for the most part," Mendoza said. "It's very hard to look to the future or the value of education when you're so focused on the present, on survival."

Mendoza understands what it's like. He grew up in La Colonia and attended a segregated school where Spanish was forbidden on the playground. By the time Mendoza, his brothers and most of the local boys were 10 or 11, they frequently joined their parents in the field. He remembers an attendance officer who would search for truant kids working in the fields, picking them up and driving them to school.

When asked about housing growing up, Mendoza comments: "We had no choice, it was the only area we could afford to rent. It was a form of 'economic segregation', which resulted in ethnic separation, as well."

Recognizing the importance of education, Mendoza went on to receive a bachelors in Spanish language and literature from the University of Redlands and a masters in Cultural Anthropology from USC. With a desire to help children, his first position was teaching 6th grade in Inglewood enabling him to continue graduate work at USC.

This past May, Joe Mendoza received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Cal State Channel Islands University in recognition of his work as a teacher, administrator, and advocate for thousands of students in need.

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CHEF TIM KILCOYNE

SRATCH-VENTURA

Farm to Table Reception and Dinner

Tim Kilcoyne's passion for food began with watching his great-grandfather make fettuccine alfredo. At the age of 11, Kilcoyne took over the important role of carving the turkey on Thanksgiving. A few years later, all he wanted for Christmas was a pasta maker. The age of 14 found him begging his parents to let him get a job at a local French restaurant, where his career officially began washing dishes and bussing tables.

After attending culinary school in Portland, Oregon, Chef Tim accepted an internship at the Playboy Mansion and later jobs at prestigious eateries including Favoritz Restaurant in Thousand Oaks, Louise's Trattoria in Los Angeles, and Cafe Melisse in Valencia. In 2003 his mother and stepfather, retiring to Ventura, learned of an old 1910 Pullman train car in their search to open a hot dog stand. With Tim Kilcoyne at the helm, the infamous The SideCar restaurant was born. It was the first restaurant in the region to offer farm-to-table fare via a menu that mentioned local growers by name. Seven years later, he opened a second restaurant, The Local Café (closed in 2012). In 2013, with lease issues, The SideCar closed, and Chef Tim creating new ventures.



Today Chef Tim and his staff can be found aboard "Scratch," a Ventura county-based gourmet food truck offering "Seasonal Californian" cuisine. All food is prepared with fresh and natural ingredients, providing 'take-out' and catering at various locales around the area. Chef Tim is a big believer in buying local, direct from farmers, food stands, certified farmer's markets and other local purveyors. He sees the many benefits including a better flavored and fresher product, reduction in carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions with less transportation, and supporting local farmers as well as the area's economy. Since Scratch only uses local fresh meats and produce, Chef Tim is constantly talking to local farmers to find out what's available and in season.

OTHER EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

RECEPTION with wines from local wineries and beer from Camarillo's Institution Ale.

AUCTION with unique items such as 2-nights in the Crowne Plaza Executive Suite with breakfast;

Jeep-ride, tapas and cocktails at the Atmore Ranch above Ventura;

original art by local artist Gail Pidduck; and more!

CENTERPIECE RAFFLE with product donated by local farmers and businesses.

ENTERTAINMENT by Santa Paula harpist, Mr. Xavier Montes "Big X"

For more information:

www.VCHousingTrustFund.org/2017-event

(805) 330-6987

TICKETS: \$55 or 2 for \$100

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