

San Diego Newsline

Downtown San Diego news — the budget, public safety, business, and the civic life of America's Finest City

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DOWNTOWN

Gaslamp Quarter New Year's Celebration



Illustration from a photo by Bernard Gagnon · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

Altitude Sky Lounge – NYE in the Sky 2026!

8:00 p.m. – 1:30 a.m. | Doors open 8:00 p.m.

Location: 660 K Street, San Diego, CA 92101

Celebrate New Year's Eve in San Diego at ALTITUDE Sky Lounge, the tallest rooftop bar in the Gaslamp Quarter. Ring in 2026 twenty-two floors above downtown with a live DJ, sweeping city views, festive party favors, and exclusive NYE drink specials in one of San Diego's top New Year's Eve rooftop events.

Ticket Includes: • Entry starting at 8:00 PM • One complimentary drink (premium well, beer, or house wine/champagne) • Happy Hour pricing all night • NYE party favors • Food available for purchase

VIP Table Experience: Reserve a VIP table with guaranteed seating, complimentary Moët & Chandon (one bottle for two guests, two bottles for up to six), and chef's choice welcome hors d'oeuvres.

Ticket Information: General admission tickets are \$79. Limited availability. Non-refundable. Seating not guaranteed.

Hard Rock Hotel: Timeless NYE Celebration

Location: 207 Fifth Ave, San Diego, CA 92101

Celebrate New Year's Eve 2026 in San Diego with Hard Rock Hotel San Diego's Timeless NYE celebration, hosted by Brittany Cartwright (Bravo's Vanderpump Rules and The Valley). This multi-level

Gaslamp Quarter party features three floors, seven themed areas, and nonstop entertainment from over 15 of San Diego's top DJs.

Event Highlights: • Live DJs including Sam Blacky, Alibi, DJ Five, and more • Music across pop, house, hip hop, Latin, reggaeton, and open format • Seven immersive themed areas across the venue • Rooftop celebration under the stars • High-energy dance floors, bars, and photo moments

Featured Themed Areas Include: • Mirror Ball in 207 • Electric Midnight at The Edge • The Golden Ballroom in Legends • Garden of Time rooftop experience • Countdown Corridor with pop-ups, bars, and photo ops

VIP + Fast Pass Options: Bubbly Fast Pass tickets include expedited entry, access to two exclusive 80s Arcade lounges, private bars, classic arcade games, and four glasses of champagne from 8:00–10:00 PM at the 207 bar. VIP experiences also available.

More Info! TICKETS! The Shout! House: New Year's Eve Location: 655 4th Ave, San Diego, CA 92101 The Shout! House | Gaslamp Quarter December 31, 2025 | Doors 6:30 PM | Pianos 7:30 PM

Ring in New Year's Eve 2026 in San Diego at The Shout! House, home of the nation's #1 nonstop dueling piano show. Celebrate NYE in the Gaslamp Quarter with high-energy live music, crowd-favorite performers, guaranteed seating, and a festive champagne toast to close out the year.

Ticket Includes: • Live dueling piano show starting at 7:30 PM • Guest performance by The Horny Boys horn section • Guaranteed seating • Champagne toast at midnight • Souvenir Shout! House embossed champagne glass

Additional Details: • Doors open at 6:30 PM; guests must arrive by 8:00 PM or tickets may be resold • NYE special food menu available à la carte (kitchen closes at 11:00 PM) • Limited standing-room tickets available at the door for \$50 • All ticket sales are final and non-refundable

Seating Options: Gold, Silver, Bronze, Bar Rail, and Side-View seating available. All tables seat four guests; each seat is sold individually.

Garage Kitchen + Bar: Ring in 2026 at Garage Kitchen + Bar

Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2025 | Doors open at 3:00 PM

Location: 655 4th Ave, San Diego, CA 92101

Kick off New Year's Eve 2026 in San Diego at Garage Kitchen + Bar. Starting early and going late, this Gaslamp Quarter NYE spot is perfect as your first stop, last stop, or all-night home base—no cover, high energy, and a midnight countdown to ring in the New Year.

Happy Hour (3:00–6:00 PM): • 51% off all drinks (excluding specialty cocktails and top shelf) • \$3 off all appetizers

Evening Highlights: • DJ from 9:00 PM to close spinning party favorites • Midnight countdown to

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

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Gaslamp Quarter New Year’s Celebration

welcome 2026 • No cover all night

Gather your crew, fuel up on food and drinks, and dance into the New Year in the heart of downtown San Diego.

More Info! Parq Nightclub: New Year’s Eve 2026 – The New Roaring 20’s Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2025

Location: 615 Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101

Doors: 9:00 PM | Show: 9:00 PM | Ends: 2:00 AM

Step into New Year’s Eve 2026 in San Diego with PARQ Nightclub’s New Roaring 20’s Gatsby-inspired soirée. Celebrate NYE in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter with high-energy nightlife, immersive vibes, and a glamorous countdown to the New Year.

Event Highlights: • Gatsby-inspired Roaring 20’s theme • High-energy nightclub experience • Festive countdown to welcome 2026 • Stylish NYE celebration in downtown San Diego

Location: 560 Fifth Ave, San Diego, CA 92101 December 31, 2025 | 7:00 PM – 1:00 AM

Celebrate New Year’s Eve 2026 in San Diego at El Chingon, one of the Gaslamp Quarter’s most high-energy nightlife destinations. Ring in the New Year with bold vibes, a packed dance floor, and an unforgettable downtown San Diego NYE party.

VIP Table Packages: • \$1,500 VIP Package – Entry for 8 guests and three bottles from select options • \$800 VIP Package – Entry for 4 guests, one bottle of champagne, and one additional select bottle

Event Highlights: • Lively NYE celebration in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter • VIP table experiences available • Countdown energy to welcome 2026

Tickets and VIP tables are limited. Advance reservations strongly recommended.

Cafe Sevilla: New Year’s Eve! Celebrate 2026!

Location: 353 Fifth Ave, San Diego, CA 92101 Cafe Sevilla | Gaslamp Quarter

Seating times begin at 9:45 PM | Party until 2:00 AM

Celebrate New Year’s Eve 2026 in San Diego at Cafe Sevilla with an exclusive Tapas Bar Table Package in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter. Enjoy live Latin music, festive cocktails, Spanish cuisine, and a high-energy countdown to the New Year at one of downtown San Diego’s most popular NYE destinations.

Table Package Includes: • Reserved table seating from selected ticket time until 2:00 AM • Live Latin band with alternating DJ sets • Specialty New Year’s Eve food and cocktail menus • NYE party favors and midnight countdown celebration

Food & Beverage Minimum: • \$100 per person food and beverage minimum (tax and 20% gratuity added at end of evening) • Eventbrite fees paid separately • All orders apply to one check; split checks not available • No refunds for unused food and beverage minimum

Seating Times: 9:45 PM, 10:00 PM, 10:15 PM, 10:30 PM, or 10:45 PM (based on ticket purchased). Guests arriving more than 30 minutes late may forfeit their table.

Lionfish San Diego: New Year’s Eve 2026 5-Course Dining Experience

Location: 435 Fifth Ave, San Diego, CA 92101 Lionfish | Gaslamp Quarter December 31, 2025 | New Year’s Eve Dining Experience

Celebrate New Year’s Eve 2026 in San Diego at Lionfish with an elevated five-course dining experience in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter. Priced at \$170 per person , this special New Year’s Eve menu features expertly curated seafood and premium proteins, designed for a refined and memorable night in downtown San Diego.

Event Highlights: • Five-course New Year’s Eve prix fixe menu • Sophisticated dining experience in the Gaslamp Quarter • Limited à la carte menu available at the bar and lounge • Ideal for an upscale NYE dinner celebration

Reservations are limited and strongly recommended.

Huntress San Diego: New Year’s Eve 2026 Dining Experience

Location: 376 Fifth Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101 Huntress | Gaslamp Quarter | New Year’s Eve Dinner

Celebrate New Year’s Eve 2026 in San Diego with an elevated dining experience at Huntress in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter. Indulge in Chef’s seasonal specialties including Caviar Donuts, King Crab Brown Butter Risotto, and Japanese Hokkaido Snow Beef, paired with an exclusive NYE Bubbles Menu.

Event Highlights: • Chef-driven seasonal New Year’s Eve menu • Exclusive Bubbles Menu • Complimentary champagne toast at midnight • Upscale NYE dining in downtown San Diego

Make your final dinner of the year exceptional with a refined New Year’s Eve celebration at Huntress.

Location: 366 Fifth Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101 Lumi Rooftop | Gaslamp Quarter Dinner + Rooftop NYE Celebration Dress Code: Upscale Casual

Celebrate New Year’s Eve 2026 in San Diego at Lumi Rooftop with one unforgettable night and two ways to ring in the New Year—an elevated NYE dinner followed by a high-energy rooftop celebration in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter.

NYE Dinner Experience: Ring in 2026 with Lumi’s full dinner menu plus Chef’s celebratory features, including Butter-Poached Lobster Tail, Seared Angus Beef Tenderloin with black truffle demi-glace, and the Count to 2026 Luxe NYE

Sushi Duo featuring premium nigiri and signature rolls.

NYE Rooftop Celebration: • Live DJ entertainment on the heated rooftop • Premier table and VIP firepit table options • Guests with table reservations check in at 10:00 PM and keep their table all night • Full dinner menu, cocktails, bottle service, and champagne menus available • Complimentary signature cocktail Midori Yutaka from 7:30–9:30 PM • Party favors and sparkling toast at the midnight countdown

Rustic Root: New Year’s Eve 2026 Dinner Experience

Location: 535 Fifth Ave, San Diego, CA 92101 Rustic Root | Gaslamp Quarter | New Year’s Eve Dinner

Celebrate New Year’s Eve 2026 in San Diego at Rustic Root with an elevated dinner experience in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter. Ring in the New Year with a thoughtfully curated multi-course menu designed for a refined and memorable final meal of the year.

Dinner Highlights: • Lobster bisque finished with crème fraîche, black truffle, chives, and extra virgin olive oil • Grilled New York strip with yam pavé, white asparagus, herbed butter, and red wine demi-glace • Optional lobster tail add-on available • Red velvet panna cotta with macerated seasonal berries and hazelnut brittle

Perfect for a sophisticated New Year’s Eve celebration before heading out for the countdown or enjoying a relaxed night of exceptional dining in downtown San Diego.

Location: 536 Market Street, San Diego, CA 92101 Side Bar Nightclub | Gaslamp Quarter 8:30 PM – 2:00 AM

Celebrate New Year’s Eve 2026 in San Diego at Side Bar Nightclub, one of the Gaslamp Quarter’s most stylish nightlife destinations. Ring in the New Year with a high-energy

DJ set, disco-ball glamour, and a champagne toast at midnight alongside San Diego’s elite nightlife crowd.

General Admission Includes: • Entry to the NYE celebration • Live DJ entertainment • Midnight countdown activation • Complimentary champagne toast at midnight

Ticket Info: • General Admission: \$50 (includes champagne toast) • Limited tickets available

Dress to impress and welcome 2026 in true Gaslamp Quarter style.

Gaslamp Quarter Association news release · Dec 18, 2025



Illustration from a photo by Edward O'Connor (hober) · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0

COUNTY

County Offices Will Close for New Year’s Day

To commemorate the New Year, San Diego County public offices, family resource centers, public health clinics, libraries and animal shelters will be closed Thursday, Jan. 1.

Law enforcement, emergency animal control response and other essential services will continue through the holiday.

County parks, campgrounds and neighborhood day-use parks remain open 365 days a year. However, the following locations will be closed Thursday:

4S Ranch Recreation Office only (all parks will be open)

Camping reservations can always be made online at the County’s Online Camping Reservations web page , but the Department of Parks and Recreation’s reservation phone line will not be staffed during the holiday.

All County offices will resume normal business hours Friday, Jan. 2.

County of San Diego news release · Dec 23, 2025

COUNTY

County Offices to Close for Christmas

San Diego County public offices, family resource centers, public health clinics, libraries and animal shelters will be closed Thursday, Dec. 25 for the Christmas holiday.

Essential services such as law enforcement and

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY (CONTINUED)

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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County Offices to Close for Christmas

emergency animal control response will continue through the holiday.

County Public Health Centers will also close at 3 p.m. on Dec. 24.

County parks, campgrounds and neighborhood day-use parks remain open

365 days a year. However, the following locations will be closed Thursday:

4S Ranch Recreation Office only (all parks will be open) Camping reservations can

always be made online at the County’s Online Camping Reservations web page , but the Department of Parks and Recreation’s reservation phone line will not be staffed during the holiday.

All County offices will resume normal business hours Friday, Dec. 26.

County of San Diego news release · Dec 18, 2025

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

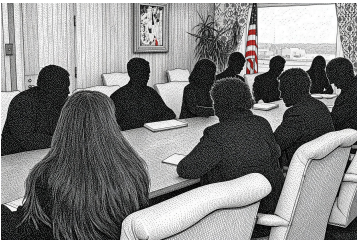


Illustration from a photo by Department of Housing and Urban Development. Office of the Chief Human Capital O · Wikimedia Commons, Public domain

BUSINESS

Voices in Leadership Forum

Last month, the Chamber proudly hosted a first-of-its-kind convening spotlighting women leaders across the public and private sectors in the CaliBaja region. Voices in Leadership: Women Driving Business, Advocacy, and Public Service in CaliBaja brought together influential women whose leadership is shaping policy, strengthening our economy, and advancing our binational community.

The event featured two dynamic panels. The first showcased women elected officials leading with purpose and impact, including Ambassador Alicia Kerber Palma, Consul General of Mexico in San Diego; Chula Vista Deputy Mayor Carolina Chávez; and Lemon Grove Mayor Alysson Snow. Panelists candidly discussed the challenges women face in public service, the barriers they have overcome, and their shared commitment to driving positive change and prosperity in our region.

The second panel highlighted leadership in the private sector, featuring Chamber Board Member Lisa Kay, J’Keren Sears of Alaska Airlines, and small business owner Rosalba Bastillos. Each speaker shared their professional journeys, aspirations, and the opportunities their careers have created, while

also addressing the real challenges of leadership and growth as women in business.

Originally planned for the Chamber boardroom, overwhelming interest and registration prompted the event’s relocation to the Sharp Prebys Innovation and Education Center, a testament to the strong demand for spaces that elevate women’s voices and leadership.

Due to its tremendous success, the Chamber is excited to announce plans to host additional Voices in Leadership sessions in 2026, in partnership with LEAD San Diego. Stay tuned as we continue to create platforms that inspire, connect, and empower the next generation of leaders.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Dec 18, 2025

BUSINESS

MOU with Coparmex

This month, the Chamber signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Confederación Patronal de la República Mexicana (COPARMEX) formalizing our commitment to advancing cross-border collaboration and strengthening business and economic ties between the United States and Mexico. COPARMEX is an independent, non-partisan, and voluntary employers’ association that brings together business owners of all sizes and sectors, united by a deep commitment to Mexico, who represent in the labor, economic, social, and political spheres, both within and outside Mexico.

The agreement reaffirms the strategic importance of the CaliBaja region as an interconnected economic and

social hub, united by shared priorities in security, infrastructure, water, energy, trade, border efficiency, and economic development. Both organizations share a commitment to building collaborative mechanisms that enable coordinated action and active participation in joint events, initiatives, and forums that advance the region’s collective prosperity.

“The border is not just a point of connection; it is a powerful engine of innovation, trade, and shared prosperity,” said Chris Cate, President and CEO of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce . “This partnership reinforces our commitment to advancing coordinated solutions in areas like infrastructure, water, and economic development. By formalizing our collaboration, we are creating stronger mechanisms for action that will directly benefit our business community and the binational economy we all depend on.”

The MOU outlines ongoing collaboration on events, policy coordination, and economic development efforts that benefit both sides of the border. While this is the first formal agreement of its kind between both organizations, the Chamber and COPARMEX have a long history of close collaboration. This agreement formalizes and strengthens that enduring partnership.

“For COPARMEX Tijuana, this agreement with the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce strengthens our vision of working in unity for a stronger and more competitive binational region,” said Roberto Vega, President of COPARMEX. “Looking ahead

of 2026, we face complex challenges like the revision of the USMCA agreement, border security, facilitating border crossings, investment in infrastructure, and trade and economic cooperation. Only working together will we be able to create these challenges into opportunities. What we have agreed to today is to work as a united team to resolve common hurdles and achieve a safer, more competitive, efficient, and prosperous border region.”

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Dec 18, 2025

BUSINESS

Member Spotlight – NextMed

Driving Innovation: NextMed and Sharp HealthCare Transform Specialty Care

As San Diego solidifies its reputation for healthcare excellence, the intersection between independent practices and major health systems has never been more critical. At the forefront of this evolution is NextMed , a specialized medical ecosystem designed to empower private practices and foster collaboration with regional leaders such as Sharp HealthCare.

NextMed marks a new era of collaborative healthcare, bringing together several of the region’s leading medical providers under one roof. Located at 5643 Copley Drive in San Diego, the campus serves as a comprehensive destination for patients, featuring a premier lineup that includes United Medical Doctors (Urgent Care and Multi-Specialty Clinic), Rejuvenate Plastic Surgery, 4M Dental Implants, Ortho 1 (Medical Group and Physical Therapy), and the San Diego Sleep Study Center.

This unique environment allows independent specialists to thrive within a state-of-the-art infrastructure designed for innovation. Central to this ecosystem is the newly opened Sharp San Diego Surgery Center (SSDSC). Occupying 18,643 square feet within the NextMed facility, this world-class outpatient center features five “first-in-class” operating rooms dedicated to Orthopedic Surgery, Total Joint Replacement, and ENT.

“Our goal at NextMed has always been to create a space where the highest caliber of independent medicine can flourish,” says Scott Leggett, CEO of NextMed. “By aligning our innovative environment with the clinical excellence of Sharp HealthCare, we are providing San Diegans with a seamless experience that combines the scale of a major health system with the personalized care of private specialists.”

The integration of the SSDSC into the NextMed campus reflects a commitment to making high- quality specialty care more accessible and convenient. We invite the San Diego community to experience this new standard of care, where advanced technology meets a patient-centered environment.

Whether you are seeking specialized surgery or routine wellness care, our doors are open to provide you with the region’s best medical expertise in one modern location. Visit NextMedCenter.com for more information or contact Suzanne Forman, NextMed Director of Facilities at (760) 405-5030.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Dec 19, 2025

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Your taxes, their fireworks

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

Opinion — the views of the writers named, not news reporting

COMMENTARY
Hidden Utility Surcharge Adds to California Families’ Burden, Policy Center Researcher Says
Mitchell G. Bahnson of the California Policy Center argues that the state’s Public Purpose Program functions as an opaque tax embedded in energy bills, driving up costs for households that receive little or no benefit.

California families have watched their electricity and natural gas bills rise sharply in recent years even when their consumption stays flat, according to Mitchell G. Bahnson, a research assistant at the California Policy Center.

Citing a 2023 Transparency Foundation study, Bahnson notes that state residents pay as much as 67 percent more for electricity and 30 percent more for natural gas than the national average, with many seeing monthly charges double or triple during high-usage periods.

While attention often

focuses on utility company earnings, Bahnson writes that a major driver of higher bills comes from state-mandated surcharges that are largely invisible to customers.

At the heart of these added costs is the Public Purpose Program, which Bahnson describes as a surcharge built directly into utility rates to finance an array of government initiatives.

These initiatives include aid for low-income households, energy-efficiency improvements, and efforts aimed at “diversity” and “underrepresented community” programs.

Bahnson argues that although the programs may have good intentions, spreading their costs across all ratepayers raises energy prices for everyone, including middle-class families who gain no direct advantage yet shoulder much of the expense.

Most households remain unaware they are even paying the charge, Bahnson writes.

Bahnson traces the surcharge’s origins to legislation passed in the 1990s. AB 1890, enacted in 1996, created the original “Public Goods Charge” on electric bills starting in 1998 to support low-income aid, efficiency projects, and renewable energy.

A follow-up measure, AB 1002 from 2000, extended a similar public-purpose fee to natural-gas customers.

The California Public Utilities Commission oversees and modifies these charges, but Bahnson stresses that the Legislature originally granted the authority.

Because utilities must collect the money, Bahnson contends it operates like a tax, yet it bypasses standard tax procedures and does not show up as a distinct line item on most bills.

Instead, the fee is folded into the broader rate structure that the CPUC approves, allowing companies to pass expenses directly to customers.

Taken together with other hidden mandates, these costs

add at least one-third to the typical bill according to the Transparency Foundation report, with the Public Purpose Program forming a significant share, Bahnson writes.

The impact lands especially hard on retirees and families living on fixed incomes, Bahnson states. Households already strained by elevated food and housing prices find their utility costs climbing faster than wages, and many do not qualify for the very programs their payments support.

Lack of transparency prevents most people from understanding exactly what they are funding, Bahnson adds.

With household budgets already stretched, Bahnson warns that these concealed charges make it tougher for families to manage their finances.

Bahnson suggests several fixes that would not require eliminating the underlying programs. Lawmakers could shift funding to the state’s general fund, supported mainly by income and sales

taxes rather than utility bills.

Another option, Bahnson says, is to mandate “truth in billing” that would require all taxes and surcharges to be clearly labeled on statements, giving consumers greater visibility.

Such steps would address the secrecy surrounding the charges but would not change the program’s redistributive nature, he writes.

Whatever approach is chosen, Bahnson concludes, families deserve to know precisely what they are paying for and who decided to impose those costs.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Dec 18, 2025

ABOUT THIS PAPER
San Diego Newsline covers downtown San Diego first — City Hall, the Gaslamp Quarter, East Village, Little Italy, Barrio Logan and the waterfront — and the county around it. Every item names its source; read the originals and our standards at sandiegonewsline.com.