

# O' TOWNTIE

• Your newsletter from the Old Town Orcutt Revitalization Association •

## Welcome to Old Town Orcutt and OTORA!

Thank you for supporting our first-ever “A Taste of Old Town Orcutt” event. Your event ticket includes a 2023/2024 membership to OTORA. As an OTORA member you’ll be the first to know about upcoming events and progress with efforts toward town and streetscape improvements.

## What is OTORA (Old Town Orcutt Revitalization Association)?

OTORA is a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to continually improve the economical, social, cultural, and environmental vitality of Old Town Orcutt – interpreting and preserving the past – while ensuring quality design for the future with a comprehensive plan to organize, design, promote, and restore the commercial district.

OTORA was founded in 2003 by a forward-thinking group of community members who respected the town’s history and charm, and wanted to ensure its future survival and potential as a pedestrian-friendly place of retail, eateries, and commerce. Thanks to the passion and efforts of this diligent group, the Santa Barbara County Streetscape Plan was adapted and approved in 2006. You may view the plan for Old Town Orcutt via the link provided on our website.

Since then, OTORA’s efforts have resulted in additional parking, landscaped bulb-outs at intersections (making the streets more aesthetic and safer), trees lining the town, the large mural and town clock (next to the 76 station), park benches, trash receptacles, and most recently, the inception of our very own monthly Summer Farmers Market! And all of these improvements (other than the parking/bulb-outs) have been funded through community donations/efforts.

## What makes Old Orcutt special and unique?

A little history about our town:

In 1901, William Warren Orcutt, a Union Oil Company engineer and geologist, was assigned to survey the Santa Maria area to determine the likelihood of oil presence. Orcutt’s positive report led to Union Oil’s acquisition of over 70,000 acres, and eventually 22 productive oil wells. Oil workers and their families flocked to the area and the Union Oil Company directed Mr. Orcutt to lay out a town and name it after himself.

In December of 1904, a well designated as “Hartnell No. 1”, originally thought to be a bust, shot a 150 foot geyser into the air. At the time, this was the largest oil strike in North America. The well soon produced 12,000 barrels/day, and one million barrels of crude over the first 100 days of its flow.

The oil crew nicknamed the well “Old Maud.” She caused a town to spring up around her to include 1,000 residents, a school, a bank, a church,

several stores, two restaurants, a hotel, and three saloons. However, the town lacked electricity, public water and in most cases, indoor plumbing.

When the oil boom ended in the 1920s and the main highway was re-routed to bypass Orcutt, the once bustling town ceased to be the trading and economic center. Santa Maria then became the main hub of the area.

Nestled among oak dotted foothills, Orcutt, affectionately called Old Town Orcutt, Old Town, or O’ Town by locals, is rich in history, beauty, and character. The once-sleepy little town has awakened to find thriving shops, an antique barn, day spas, eateries, world-class wine tasting, breweries, a garden center, boutique inn, and numerous other points of commerce. The residents and business members of Old Town Orcutt love our serene and picturesque little town!



Please proudly display the membership sticker included in your gift bag on your car, home, or business window!

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