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Board Supports Local Small Businesses

Retail Theft Initiative Funded

Stockton, CA – At its meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors authorized fund transfers to support local businesses fight retail theft and assist local shoppers. The Board reallocated \$1.3 million from the Employment and Economic Development Department’s (EEDD) Small Business Assistance Grant Program (SBAG) to fund the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce’s Stockton Takes Action Against Retail Theft Program (STAART) and a security camera grant program. The grant is part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and must be used to respond to the negative impacts of the public health emergency (COVID-19) including aid to impacted industries.

“Retail theft continues to plague local businesses, and we know that our residents are frustrated and ready to help,” commented Board Vice Chair Paul Canepa. “That’s why I used some of my district funds to help get this project off the ground. I am thankful that our EEDD department has found additional federal dollars that can be used to help our local businesses. We want large retail theft rings to know that there is no place in San Joaquin County for them – other than the County jail. Our elected officials, law enforcement, and residents have said enough is enough. We are united to ensure there will be consequences for criminal behavior.”

The STAART program is a retail theft initiative designed to tackle the serious epidemic that is currently wreaking havoc on our business community, resulting in substantial financial losses, wasted time, and diminished future revenue. By building upon existing initiatives aimed at combating retail theft in San Joaquin County, the STAART program takes a proactive approach to engage in activities and strategies aimed at mitigating crime effectively.

“We appreciate the support of the Board of Supervisors in helping to combat retail theft in San Joaquin County. It impacts small businesses greatly but even our larger retailers know that prices are impacted when theft is common,” commented Timm Quinn, the CEO of the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce. “The Chamber continues to hold regular trainings as part of the STAART program and is committed to informing our residents on how to be the best possible witness to help prosecute criminal theft rings in our area.”

The Chamber will also administer a Security Camera Grant program for local businesses with the proposed one-time funding allocation of \$500,000. The STAART will provide San Joaquin County small business owners onetime grants to install a camera system in their place of business. Grants will be administered by the Chamber and be available to businesses countywide, on a firstcome, first-served basis, until funds are exhausted. The maximum grant amount is \$2,000 per property.

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