



NEWS RELEASE

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Imagine Salinas as a City of Letters Two Community Events Invite the Public to Explore its Future as a City of Letters

February 5, 2010 — Salinas, CA. Imagine Salinas's future as a City of Letters, a city that engages the community in its literary legacy of Nobel laureate John Steinbeck, other writers and poets, and in a commitment to reading and literacy.

What is a City of Letters? The Salinas Public Library and the National Steinbeck Center invite the community to imagine Salinas five, ten and twenty years in the future. Each year, thousands of people come to Salinas as a destination to experience the places that Nobel laureate John Steinbeck brought to life. Steinbeck's stories of Salinas have been widely translated and are beloved by people around the world, and many other writers have recounted the stories of Salinas in the pages of their books. Salinas is rooted in a ground of letters.

Could Salinas evolve into an internationally-recognized **literary-historic destination**, appearing regularly in national press and travel literature, sought after by tourists and the employees of new businesses as a unique place to visit? Imagine for a moment:

- A literary district in Oldtown Salinas with clusters of indoor and outdoor spaces featuring sunny courtyards, roof gardens, a café bookstore and Library, an example of a mixed-use literary, cultural and social space.
- An expanded Cesar Chavez Library as the center of a vibrant East Salinas community and dramatically improved literacy rates.
- Public art sculptures that celebrate books, letters and literary themes that serve as a reminder of the power and possibility of the written word.
- Literary landmarks with a series of imaginative maps that invite visitors to step into history as into the pages of a book.

We invite the community of Salinas to a series of conversations on creating a “City of Letters” on February 24 and March 10. Join the conversation and explore with us the rich potential this could bring to the future of the cultural and economic vitality of Salinas. Bring your ideas and vision to the “Blueprint for a City of Letters” events to be held in Oldtown and East Salinas on the following dates:

February 24
6:30-8:30 pm
National Steinbeck Center
1 Main Street, Salinas
831-775-4721

Special Guest: Dr. Camila Alire, President of the American Library Association
Free and Open to Everyone

March 10
6:00-8:00 pm
Cesar Chavez Library
615 Williams Road
831-758-7345

In Spanish & English
Free and Open to Everyone

This program is part of “Salinas: City of Letters,” the second year of the collaborative programming presented by the Salinas Public Library and the National Steinbeck Center. This program is funded by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Its mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. For more information, visit www.ims.gov.

