



## **Girl Scout Board Member and SoCalGas Senior Public Affairs Manager, Maria Ventura, Recognized as Business Leader of the Year**

*Honored by Ventura County Leadership Academy for outstanding community leadership and service*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**VENTURA** – April 21, 2022 — [Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast's](#) board member and [Southern California Gas Co.](#) (SoCalGas) senior public affairs manager Maria Ventura was honored today as "2022 Business Leader of the Year" by the [Ventura County Leadership Academy](#) (VCLA) for her years of championing the local Ventura County community through exceptional leadership and charitable service. She has the added distinction of being the first woman of color to receive this recognition and was honored at the organization's Journey to Leadership Awards Luncheon today in Camarillo.

"Maria believes everyone deserves the right to access resources to help them reach their full potential, every child, in fact—all people are important. It is this philosophy which led her to become a trusted and valued leader in the Ventura County business community for many years," noted Tammie Helmuth, CEO for the Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast. "Maria demonstrates her unwavering support for equity and a sense of fairness by partnering with local nonprofits so communities in which SoCalGas provides services can have access to educational, health, safety and economic development resources".



Maria advocates for others by inspiring and giving a voice to those who may not have a seat at the table. She is a leader in supporting the local community and charitable issues across Ventura County. This includes providing charitable donations to local organizations such as Food Share, food and necessity donations to farm workers, and assisting with grants and donations to provide low-income families in Ventura County access to affordable energy service.

"We honor distinguished business leaders like Maria Ventura – those who lead with heart and are committed to helping others succeed along the way", said Pattie Braga, Executive Director of Ventura County Leadership Academy (VCLA). "Maria exemplified VCLA's mission – local leaders working together to impact change in our community so that everyone can thrive."

Giving back to the community is the right thing to do and I am grateful to work for SoCalGas which encourages my volunteerism." said Maria Ventura. "I am humbled and honored and consider this recognition as a testament of perseverance- my own and the generations of women before me. I often tell young people and community members I meet with that they can accomplish anything – sometimes, we just have to give them the opportunities and tools to do so".

As senior public affairs manager for SoCalGas, Maria leads community and government affairs efforts on behalf of the utility throughout Ventura County. In 2013, Maria joined SoCalGas and has held a variety of increasingly responsible roles within regional public affairs and stakeholder outreach. Prior to joining SoCalGas, her distinguished career included public and private sector experience with expertise in government and community affairs, bilingual media relations, and philanthropic giving.

In 2017, Maria was named a "Latina of Influence" by Hispanic Lifestyle, a nationally syndicated PBS program that profiles influential and notable Latina community leaders and received the Pacific Coast Business Times's "Top 50 Women in Business" and "Latinos in Business" awards for her outstanding professional accomplishments and commitment to improving the community.

Maria serves on several community boards including the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Ventura, Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast and El Concilio.

Maria is an alumna of San Diego State University and received a Master of Science in Public Administration from California State University, Los Angeles.



In her free time, she enjoys golfing, traveling, and spending time with her husband Jose, son Diego and beloved family dog Maya.

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#### **About Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast**

Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast serves over 8,800 girls across six counties and is committed to making the Girl Scout Leadership Experience available to girls in ways that impact their lives both in the moment and into the future. Girls participate in troops, individual projects, council events, day camps, resident camps and more. A variety of leadership, outdoor skills, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) based programs and events provide girls with opportunities to learn and explore in fun and informative ways. To join or volunteer in Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara or Ventura County, visit: <http://www.girlscoutscoc.org>.