

Small-town feel suits Mendez

Gonzales city manager wants to see character maintained

By **VICTOR CALDERON**
The Salinas Californian

Rene Mendez said what first drew him to Gonzales was its small-town character.

The Gonzales city manager, who took over from interim manager Bill Farrel on Feb. 1, said the city must maintain that character as it grows along with the other three south Monterey County cities, Soledad, Greenfield and King City.

"Gonzales will continue to have pressures to grow in the future, but we need to grow responsibly and stay within our means," Mendez said.

As city manager, he is responsible for overseeing the operation of the city, including the budget, personnel and legislative issues. He reports to the City Council.

Mendez served as county administrator for Inyo County for about eight years and also worked previously in the administration of Solano County and in the Legislative Analyst's Office in Sacramento.

He said juggling several tasks in Gonzales can be challenging at times but the people make his work worth it.

"I like the diversity of residents here," Mendez said. "Working with the community on special events like the Fourth of July celebration is fun."

In his free time, he enjoys reading and playing golf, he said, and is a tennis coach at Gonzales High School.

Gonzales Mayor Matt Gourley said Mendez is a perfect fit for the City Council and a man who wants to keep the city a safe place to raise children, offering recreation opportunities.

He has also endeared himself to residents, Gourley said.

"Rene has jumped into the Rotary Club and has gotten out and introduced himself to business owners downtown," he said. "We're really happy he's become a huge part of the community here."

Mendez said he wants to con-



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Gonzales City Manager Rene Mendez is shown in the City Council chambers.

tinue to address infrastructure needs such as street paving and building a community center. He also said he wants residents to have better access to City Hall. "I want to see how I can help improve what's around me, how to make things better for the people who live here," he said. "Being in government, I'm well positioned to do that."

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RENE MENDEZ

n **AGE:** 40

n **JOB:** Gonzales city manager.

n **EXPERIENCE:** Administrator for Inyo County; senior management analyst, Solano County; senior analyst, California Legislative Analyst's Office, Sacramento.

n **EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in economics, California State University, Stanislaus; master's in public policy, Duke University.

n **PERSONAL:** Lives in Gonzales with his wife, Martha, and their two sons, Alejandro Miguel, 4, and Gabriel Rene, 1.