

# GONZALES/ City tries to preserve ag land

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Steps included in the planned growth include a downtown revitalization project, a new \$1.5 million police station, an industrial park that will include produce-processing facilities, and a proposed 35,000-square-foot community center.

The industrial park west of city limits will help the city meet the needs of the agricultural industry, Gourley said. It is the largest single industrial investment in the city's history, Mendez said.

In March, the city approved plans for a new elementary school.

The city also has annexed another 200 acres for mixed housing and commercial use. As many as 1,000 new housing units and 30 or 40 acres of highway commercial development are expected to go in the new area, Mendez said.

The city's biggest challenge is the preservation of agriculture land, he said.

"Our city general plan promotes the preservation of ag land," Mendez said.

Residents here enjoy the city's many celebrations and festivals including the Independence Day Celebration.

The city also hosts a Public Safety Day. Nearby police, fire and rescue agencies participate in the event.

"It's a chance for the valley to come out and learn about public safety in general," Gourley said.

The event is scheduled for October.

## AT A GLANCE

n **INCORPORATED:** 1947

n **POPULATION:** 8,374

n **MAYOR/COUNCIL:** Mayor Matt Gourley, Mayor Pro-Tem George Worthy, Councilman Joe Gumke, Councilwoman Delia Gutierrez and Councilwoman Maria Orozco.

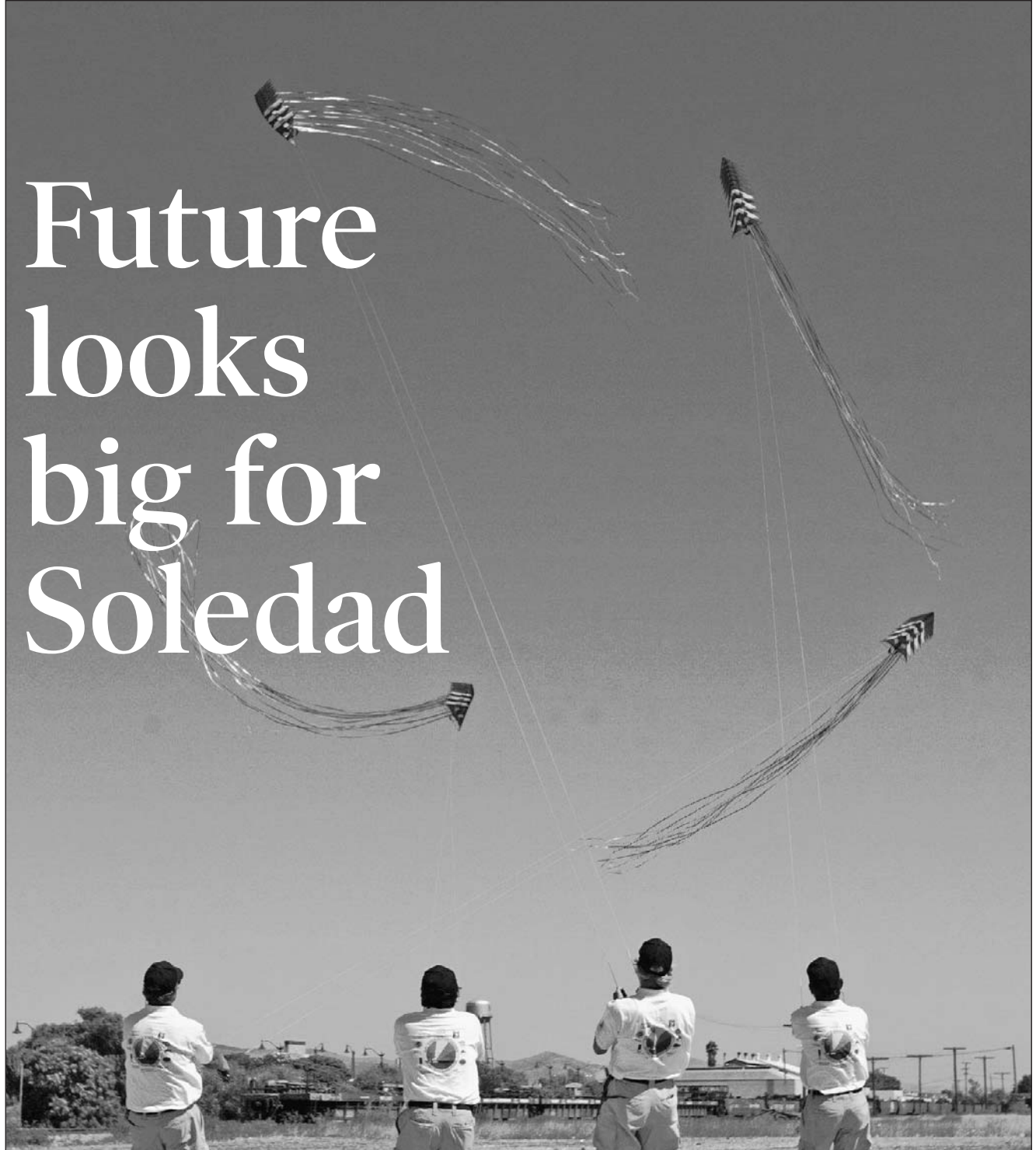
n **REGULAR MEETINGS:** City Council, 6 p.m. first and third Mondays of each month at City Hall, 147 Fourth St.; Planning Commission, second Monday of each month at City Hall.

n **IMPORTANT NUMBERS:** City Hall, 675-5000; Chamber of Commerce, 675-9019; library, 675-2209; police department, 675-5010; fire department, 675-3677.

n **ONLINE:** [www.ci.gonzales.ca.us](http://www.ci.gonzales.ca.us).

n **ISSUES:** Business and downtown redevelopment, agriculture.

# Future looks big for Soledad



SCOTT MACDONALD/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN FILE PHOTO

Members of the Bay Area Sundowners sport kite show team perform a choreographed routine in August 2005 at the Soledad Wine & Wind Festival. From left are Ken Osterlund, Randy Tom, Gordon Osterlund and Barry Nash.

## *Now that building can resume, new housing, shopping center on the way*

Staff report

Soledad is growing again. Development was put on hold for a little more than a year after the city established a building moratorium because of concerns the city's sewer plant was at capacity.

The moratorium was lifted in February and now the largest city in south Monterey County can continue to grow again, said Don Fleming, the city's community development director. About 270 housing units are scheduled to be built this year, on track with the number of homes the city saw before the moratorium, Fleming said.

People find Soledad appealing because of its good schools, small-town atmosphere and affordable housing market, when compared to Monterey and Salinas, he said.

While the median selling price of homes in Monterey County is around \$650,000, Soledad's median selling price is around \$560,000.

Fleming said Soledad has a higher percentage of affordable housing than the rest of the county.

Along with new housing, new commercial developments will soon rise in Soledad.

A new shopping center will bring the city a multi-screen movie theater — the only one between Salinas and King City — a Holiday Inn Express and other businesses as part of a project called the Soledad Village Center that will be built on 15 acres at the corner of Nestle Road and Los Coches Drive.

The town also is home to the South County YMCA, which draws residents

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