

Swearing in Salinas: Yolo County gains new multi-department head

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Posted: 05/02/16, 4:14 PM PDT | Updated: 11 hrs ago

<http://www.dailydemocrat.com/government-and-politics/20160502/swearing-in-salinas-yolo-county-gains-new-multi-department-head>



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Jesse Salinas, the county's new multi-department head, was sworn in Monday afternoon before an enthusiastic crowd of public officials and county and city staff in the Administration building's atrium,

Salinas officially became the county's new clerk-recorder/assessor/registrar of voters after being sworn in by Supervisor Jim Provenza.

The position was created in 2013 and was held by longtime clerk-recorder Freddie Oakley, who left after her more than twenty-year residency in the department to work on Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

The County Board of Supervisors appointed Salinas to the position last month over interim clerk-recorder Jeffrey Barry and former Woodland mayor Gary Sandy.

Current Woodland mayor Tom Stallard, who had endorsed Salinas for the position, and Provenza spoke on Salinas' behalf before Provenza officially swore in the new department leader.

"Jesse has overwhelmed all of us with his dependability and reliability," affirmed Stallard, going on to describe him as "unflappable."

Provenza lauded Salinas' work ethic and announced, "I can't think of a better choice for this office."

After he was sworn in, Salinas said a few words to thank all of those who had helped him along the way and to, again, emphasize his vision for the county departments.

He spoke in English and Spanish while giving the crowd insight into his bilingual upbringing and credited these early experiences for developing his appreciation for effective communication.

He also thanked his past and present staff, former soccer colleagues, friends old and new, and family for their support and inspiration.

Salinas has a long history of working for the county. Most recently, he was in the county's Financial Services Department. Before that, he served as senior management analyst in the County Administrator's Office.

In addition to Stallard and others, Salinas was also endorsed by Ag Commissioner John Young and County Librarian Patty Wong.

The County created the new position in 2002 to oversee recorder, registrar of voters, and tax assessor duties — following suit with other counties within the state who have found the merge beneficial. The combined positions have occurred over several years as supervisors consolidated departments to cut costs.

"I started realizing, everything that they are looking for I've done at one point or another," Salinas said during a recent interview. "Whether it's working with technology, diverse communities, working with youth, the ability to understand changes in the policy arena, and my strong management background."

In addition to his role of working for the county, he has also served as chairman of the County Parks and Recreation Commission for the last six years where he acted as community liaison on all parks and recreation, senior center, public works, and cemetery issues.

As chairman, Salinas also played an integral role in the Measure J steering committee in which he led volunteer outreach and education efforts to youth organizations and key civic leaders.

On his plans for the future, Salinas said he wants to continue to nurture professional growth among his staff. He also hopes to bring about updates in the county's election technology — that currently dates back to 2000.

He is likewise committed to stimulating greater outreach efforts to increase political participation and educate the community on the mysteries of the tax assessment process.

"I care that they get engaged, that they become informed," he told *The Democrat*. "Their vote does matter and I want to help them understand why it matters."

The department plans to partner with the League of Women Voters and County Office of Education due to their success in getting 90 percent of local high school seniors registered to vote.

He will also perform outreach to communities that have been historically difficult to reach due to language barriers. "I grew up, as a child, actually having to translate for my mom because she needed

somebody to translate for her because she is a native Spanish speaker. So, as a child, I learned early on the importance of effective communication,” shared the new department head.

Salinas emphasized some of what he intends to do while talking to people following his swearing in on Monday. He ended his public speech by telling those present that it was time to “move forward and provide excellence and integrity the Yolo way.”