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Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **JANUARY 10:**
The Business of Pot
Café 210
7:30 - 9:00 am
- **JANUARY 11:**
Slideshow Presentation - Reflections of Italy
City of Visalia Administration Office
220 N. Santa Fe
12:00 pm
- **JANUARY 12:**
Slideshow Presentation - Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice
City of Visalia Administration Office
220 N. Santa Fe
12:00 pm
- **JANUARY 19:**
Visalia Partners In Education Luncheon
Marriott Hotel
12:30 pm
RSVP: www.visaliachamber.org/events
559-734-5876
- **JANUARY 25:**
2017 Stop Harassment Workshop
7:30 - 10:00 am
Lamp Liter Inn
Reservations Required
www.visaliachamber.org/events
- **JANUARY 26:**
Ambassador Meeting
8:00 - 9:00 am
Visalia First Assembly Church
- **JANUARY 26:**
Business After Hours
5:30 - 7:30 pm
AMF Visalia Lanes

The Business of Charity

Nicola Wissler, Visalia Chamber of Commerce

Charity is the voluntary giving of help, typically in the form of money, to those in need. In Tulare County there are hundreds of charities who provide assistance to local residents every day of the year. Each December the Visalia Chamber of Commerce hosts the annual Christmas Tree Auction with the goal of raising awareness and money to support our local charities who, in turn, support local residents in need.

This year the Christmas Tree Auction raised nearly \$200,000 and was able to help grant the wishes of more than 30 local charities. The Christmas Tree Auction was held on December 9th, 2016 at the Visalia Convention Center. The spirit of giving was evident at the White Christmas themed event where more than 1,100 guests spent the evening eating great food, drinking local wine, dancing the night away, and learning about how they can support our community.

After 36 years of raising funds for local charities, the Christmas Tree Auction has become a legacy in Visalia. For many non-profits, this event is the primary fundraiser which they rely on to keep their operations running throughout the year. Since its inception, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce Christmas Tree Auction has raised close to 4.5 million dollars to support the local community.

The following charities participated in the auction this year and were able to raise both awareness and funding for their organizations.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Assistance League of Visalia | ■ NAMI - Tulare County |
| ■ Bethlehem Center | ■ National Alliance on Mental Illness |
| ■ CASA of Tulare County | ■ ProYouth Expanded Learning Program |
| ■ Daughters of Hope | ■ Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Central Valley |
| ■ Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center | ■ Sequoia Parks Conservancy |
| ■ El Diamante High School Class of 2017 | ■ Spirit 88.9 |
| ■ Foodlink of Tulare County | ■ St. Paul's School |
| ■ Golden State Family Services | ■ Students International |
| ■ George McCann School | ■ The Open Arms House |
| ■ Hands in the Community | ■ The Samaritan Center of Tulare Co. |
| ■ International Agri-Center, Ag Ventures! Learning Center | ■ The SOURCE LGBT+Center |
| ■ Kaweah Delta Foundation Lifeline | ■ Visalia Education Foundation |
| ■ Kaweah Delta Hospice Foundation | ■ Visalia Emergency Aid Council |
| ■ Love in the Name of Christ | ■ Visalia Police Explorers Post #32 |
| ■ Mt. Whitney High School Boosters | ■ Visalia Police PAL |
| | ■ Visalia Rescue Mission |
| | ■ Vision Visalia |



Raising nearly \$200,000 at an event is no easy task. Planning for the annual auction begins in February of each year and involves numerous volunteers who work behind the scenes to transform the Visalia Convention Center into a beautiful gala space. Charities begin designing their trees and collecting items for the auction as early as July in order to wow those in attendance with hopes of raising the funds needed to meet their year-end fundraising goals.

The Chamber would like to thank everyone who attended the auction for their support of our local charities and community. Specifically, the Chamber would like to thank those vendors who made donations of food, wine, and time to make this event possible.

This includes: Bravo Farms, Lamp Liter Inn, Mache, Ryan's Place, The Lunch Box, SaveMart, The Vintage Press, Tree House Foods, Visalia Country Club, Jack & Charlies, Pita Kabab, The Wyndham Hotel, Chapala's Grill, Corner Bakery, Best Buy Market, Bret Engelman Cellars, Bueno Beverage, Cacciatore Fine Wines & Olive Oil Corp, Cardella Winery, CRS Farms/Eric Shannon, Gallo Sales Company, Josten's American Yearbook, Loma Winery, Pioneer Nursery, Quady Winery, San Joaquin Vine Co, Silkwood Fine Wines, and Visalia Grocery Outlet.

Although the Christmas Tree Auction happens once a year, local charities work year round to provide services and programs to local residents. We hope that the spirit of giving and generosity felt at the holidays can be extended throughout the year so that the business of charity will continue to thrive in Visalia.



Travel with the Chamber:

- **The Colorado Rockies: Featuring National Parks and Historic Trains**
July 14 - 22, 2017
- **Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice**
July 26 - 31, 2017
- **Reflections of Italy**
September 6 - 15, 2017
- **China**
October 6 - 14, 2017

Collette Vacations
Mayflower Tours
Cistline

For more information, go to www.visaliachamber.org/travel

San Joaquin Valley Homes Models now Open in Visalia

Written by Business Journal staff

Local homebuilder San Joaquin Valley Homes (SVJ Homes) has announced its model homes at Visalia's Pine River Estates are set to open Dec. 17th.

Pine River Estates is a 37-acre community offering 144 single-family homes located on Virmargo Street between St. John's Parkway and Houston Avenue. San Joaquin Valley /2

Leadership & Local Government – Affecting Your City Starts with YOU

Written By Jon Bueno, Visalia Rawhide, Leadership Visalia Class Member



Issues and concerns placed in front of those who lead are innumerable, and on Friday, December 2nd, the

Leadership Visalia class of 2016-2017 was fortunate enough to gaze down the rabbit hole with some of the best and brightest minds in the community, all while maintaining a focus on local government.

First on the agenda was current Tulare County Supervisor and incoming Visalia City Councilman, Phil Cox, who was given the task of energizing a group of individuals early in the morning while brushing us up on topics our local government deals with on a daily basis. Phil was able to connect with the class by detailing his own personal journey, and explaining that it was his inner desire to be a "fixer" that led him to politics, which resonated with the group as a whole.

Next, Deputy City Manager, Eric Frost, showed the class how lessons from the past are shaping decisions for our future. We were told that although issues may arise, they present opportunity for change (e.g., city parking lots downtown are now being made of porous materials, allowing rain water to drain through and replenish ground water reserves).



After settling in at the conference room of the former Visalia Chamber of Commerce building, we were met by Vice Mayor Warren Gubler. While there, we were

given the opportunity to hear firsthand the expansive responsibilities placed before the elected officials of our community.

After enjoying ImagineU Children's Museum, the Leadership Visalia program teamed up to take on The Giganteum pizza from The Planing Mill. Although the class put forth their best effort, the behemoth of a pizza proved to be too much to handle and we took leftovers with us on our walk back to City Hall.

Battalion Chief Darrin Hughes then took on a group of sluggish class members and walked us through a day in the life of one of Visalia's fire fighters. We were told how investments in our Fire Department not only help save lives, but also help save those

living in the city MILLIONS of dollars in insurance costs.

Finally, the class was put to work. Members of the class were split into groups of two with their own agendas and concerns, while five from the group were "elected" as a makeshift City Council. We all worked together to compile a budget for the city, both explaining why we were for and/or against certain issues. All was fine until Mayor Steve Nelsen stepped to the floor and informed us that not only were we conducting our business out of order, but those on the "City Council" were in violation of the Brown Act and would be going to (pretend) jail! From there, Mayor Nelsen educated us on what it takes to conduct a meeting at City Hall and some of the various intricacies that accompany the role of a City Councilperson.

By the end of the day, the Leadership Visalia class of 2016-2017 not only had a better understanding of how our city is managed, but how we can affect that process as an individual. The future belongs to those who create it, and that is exactly the mindset needed when ushering Visalia into the next chapter.

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS



Business-Government



Business Relations



Promoting Community



Strong Local Economy

Visalia Chamber of Commerce
 222 N. Garden St., Suite 300
 Visalia, CA 93291
 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

San Joaquin Valley

(continued from page 1)

The development is located with quick access to Rawhide Stadium, downtown Visalia and major employers, including Kaweah Delta Healthcare District Hospital, College of the Sequoias and CIGNA Healthcare. St. John's River Trail is also right across the street from the community.



Pine River Estates offers five three-and-four-bedroom floorplans with three elevations each, ranging in size from 1,443 to 2,100 square feet, with lots averaging 6,700 square feet. The three models opening are 2,100 square feet, 1,658 square feet and 1,443 square feet.

SJV Homes' Co-Founder Jim Robinson said now is the time to consider homeownership, as mortgage prices are comparative to what many pay for rent.

"With rental prices soaring faster than home sales, we are seeing tremendous interest among potential renters who realize its more economical to buy a home at Pine River Estates where prices start in the low \$200,000s for three-to-four bedroom homes with two to three car garages," Robinson said in a statement. "Homebuyers at Pine River Estates could own their own home for about the same or even less than they might pay in rent for that amount of space."

According to the California Association of Realtors, 50 percent of the population of Tulare County, where Pine River Estates is located, is able to buy a home, making it California's seventh most affordable county.

A Festival of Trees 2016 in Three Rivers

Making A Difference...

St Anthony's Retreat and Santa Teresita Youth Conference Center recently celebrated the second annual fundraising event that benefited many local no-profits. The annual "Festival of Trees" again was a huge success that inspired many to give

and **Make a Difference.** As "the Stars of the Evening", nineteen small delicately lit, and decorated Christmas trees with handmade collectible ornaments & treasures generated thousands of dollars to many worthwhile organizations.

The evening would not have been complete without the vast variety of food and beverage samples provided by local eateries, wineries and brewers. A special thank you to the following: The Gateway Restaurant, The White Horse Inn, The River View, Totem Groceries and Deli, Antoinette's Coffee and Goodies, Ann Lange's, Bean to Bar Chocolate, Mavericks Coffee, Sysco Foods, and US Foods, Kaweah Brewing, and many, many more.

All proceeds benefited each individual non-profit from tree sales and auction items. This year's event supported over 25 non-profits and generated over \$33,000.

A true flavor of the Three Rivers community welcomed guests at the door with a live nativity scene performed by our very own Santa Teresita Youth Conference Center Volunteers. Prior to the opening of the main event, you could hear the sounds of the University Preparatory High School Hand bell Choir playing for those who attended the preview.

Thank you to all of our volunteers that contributed their time and energy to this wonderful production and for **Making a Difference** for so many.

About this publication ...

Business Update is the official monthly publication of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, 222 N. Garden St., Ste. 300, Visalia, CA 93291, (559) 734-5876. Periodicals, Postage Paid at Visalia, CA 93277; Publication No. USPS 494-660. Annual Subscription rate \$15. Postmaster: Send address changes to **Visalia Chamber of Commerce**, 222 N. Garden St., Ste. 300, Visalia, CA 93291. Advertising information, call the Visalia Times-Delta at 559.735.3235. **Editor: Nicola Wissler. Layout: Times-Delta Media Group.**

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Visalia SOUP is Coming

It's hard to believe that 2016 is over. For some, this year has been the best of times. And for others, you guessed it, it has been the worst of times. In this time of reflection, many search their souls and decide to do "it" differently. Some look for new jobs, others resolve to be healthier, while others decide to turn an idea into a business or expand their current business. January is an exciting time to explore what is possible.

Visalians love Visalia. It may seem obvious, but seeing this love is one of the best parts of my job. I see our citizens tackle big ideas, solve problems and overcome challenges in ways that make this community better.

Unfortunately, I also meet plenty of people whose ideas never get traction. These ideas are amazing but aren't connected to the right organization or, more often than not, lack funding. Sometimes it is the entrepreneur who just needs start up cash to get the ball rolling, but finding none puts the idea away. Other times a group of concerned citizens has a solution to a community problem, but unsure how best to raise funds, decide it's just too high a mountain to climb and never get to start on their solution. Others lack the network that would allow growth and support of their enterprise.

We are better when we support each other. Again, an idea we at the



Gail Zurek
President & CEO
Visalia Chamber
of Commerce

Chamber have long championed; and by and large as Visalians, we do support our own. It's one of the things I love most about this city. There is a sense that together we can accomplish great things; we can make Visalia great. This belief is the cornerstone to your Visalia Chamber.

Believing that together we accomplish more, we have created Visalia SOUP. Funny name, yes, but behind the funny name is an innovative solution. Started in Detroit, now happening in communities around the country, community members gather to hear four pitches, eat soup and then vote on who receives the funding raised from the evening's entrance fees. It's a simple way to share ideas and look for solutions. It helps those with great ideas connect with others and receive funding to get to the next level. We have posted a video on our website from Detroit SOUP where you can learn more. But even better, we are hosting our first Visalia SOUP on March 14. We'd love for you to attend, even better we'd love for you to submit an idea and present at Visalia SOUP. Help us fund those businesses, ideas and projects that will make our community stronger.

More information can be found at <http://www.visaliachamber.org/soup/>



COMMUNITY LOYAL MEMBERS

A thriving community starts here!



New

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome our newest members. We encourage individuals and businesses to support Chamber Member businesses.

■ **F.I.T. TRIBE ACADEMY**

Health & Medicine
559-799-6870

■ **AMF VISALIA LANES**

Recreation, Hobbies & Sports
559-625-2100

Renewing

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce thanks the following companies for renewing their commitment to the community of Visalia.

- 4 Creeks, Inc*
- All Pro Truck & Auto Body
- AMVETS Department of California*
- Cacciatore Fine Wines & Olive Oil Corp.*
- Central Valley Coffee News
- Comfort Inn & Suites Airport Drive
- Darlene Loose/ RE/MAX- Visalia

- DSW Designer Shoe Warehouse
- Innovation Commercial Flooring, Inc
- Lagomarsino Group*
- Orange Valley Cafe
- Orthopaedic Associates Medical Clinic, Inc
- Patrick L. Salazar State Farm Insurance Agency
- Soroptimist International of Visalia Inc.*
- U.S. Army
- Visalia Fox Theatre*

*Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber 110% Club.

The Business of Pot: The Impact of Recreational Marijuana on the Business Community

January 10, 2017

7:30 - 9:00 am

210 | 210 W. Center St.

Join the Visalia Chamber of Commerce and the Visalia Economic Development Corporation for a panel discussion on the impact of the passage of Prop 64.

Panelists include representatives from:

- Tulare County District Attorney's Office
- Tulare County Sheriff Department
- Visalia Police Department
- California Highway Patrol
- Brett Sutton, Sutton & Hague Law Corp.

Topics include: How does the legalization of marijuana affect drug-free work environments. Does it change an employer's ability to test for drug use? What about medical marijuana use?



What's the BIG Idea?

Written By Nicola Wissler, YEA! Program Manager

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) has been asking the question, "What's the big idea?". For the last nine weeks students have been working on this question and they finally have come up with the answer. Actually they have come up with five big ideas this year. Today we are excited to share with you the progress that the students have made to date.

Aeryal's



Aeryal Semana

Aeryal's is an organic, vegan, gluten free food business. Aeryal Semana has been a vegan for years and knows that it is hard to find vegan, gluten free, organic foods, so over the years she has adapted recipes and created her own. The signature product for Aeryal's is going to be delicious banana muffins.

The muffins can be made with or without nuts for those who have nut allergies. She plans to market her business through social media; reaching out to vegan groups and health groups who might be interested in purchasing her products.

Unknown Apparel



Rigoberto Villa

Unknown Apparel is a new clothing line created by Rigoberto Villa. Rigo has been interested in clothing for many years and often modifies the clothing that he purchases from national retailers. Unknown Apparel will launch with a signature t-shirt, the style will be extra long and slim fitted and include the Unknown Apparel logo. Future shirts may include interesting zipper designs and an option for a unisex t-shirt. Rigo plans to market his t-shirt to middle and high school students. His goal is that every student would be able to have a piece of clothing that makes them completely comfortable, but be inexpensive enough that most everyone could afford it.

Kalifornia Kisses



Alekhya Rajasekaran

Kalifornia Kisses is an all natural lipstick/lip gloss business. Alekhya Rajasekaran is like many middle school girls and loves to try out new makeup. She will be creating a lipstick line that is produced with all natural ingredients including coconut oil, bees wax and natural coloring like beet root powder. One of the factors that will help her differentiate herself from the competition is that she is going to hand paint each of the lipstick containers with an iconic California scene. Alekhya plans to donate a portion of the sales proceeds toward different conservation groups throughout California.

VR Gear



Victor Rodriguez

VR Gear will be an athletic equipment line created by Victor Rodriguez. As an athlete Victor has tried many different types of athletic bags and realized that track athletes, specifically, have had a hard time finding a bag that will not get torn up by the sharp cleats that they have to carry around every day. VR Gear's first product will be a lightweight backpack with a reinforced compartment specifically created to hold up to the wear and tear of track cleats. VR Gear will market their products to local high school track teams and hopes to be able to sell their products at local track meets throughout Tulare County.

SlingShot



Esteban Olivares

SlingShot is going to be an online resource for high school students which will help them to be better prepared to enter the workforce. The website will include tips on what employers are looking for, resume building tools, and opportunities for community service to help round out college applications and resumes for future employment. In the future the plan is to begin marketing this website to college students who are looking for employment during and after school.

Over the next few weeks while on winter break the YEA! students will be completing the rough draft of their business plan in preparation for meeting with their new business mentors who will help them refine their ideas, and provide helpful advice and resources to the students. All of the YEA! students will be out in the community during the break with product surveys, so if you see a student in a busy shopping center with a survey, take a moment to help them out and answer a few questions which will help them to be fully prepared for the Investor Panel in the spring.

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Thank you to the **Tulare County Association of Realtors** for your generous donation of Christmas gifts for the **CASA** children of Tulare County. The gifts will serve to make the holidays a bit brighter for our most vulnerable youth.

Golden State Family Services is pleased to announce our agency has earned a three-year accreditation! The Executive Director, the leadership team, and the staff have worked diligently for the past year and a half to establish guidelines and accreditation expectations! Congratulations! Dedication, hard work, and a strong desire to help the children in the Central Valley has made this possible!

Fresno Pacific University (FPU) representatives attended a ceremony November 29, 2016, at the Consulate of Mexico as part of a scholarship program. FPU received a \$15,000 scholarship from the Consulate - part of a \$35,000 investment in education by the consulate to support students in the Valley. The gift was FPU's first and was the largest award given.

Happy Trails is proud to introduce two new members of their team. Nicole Payne is their most recent riding instructor. Nicole studied equine science and psychology at Colorado State University and graduated with a degree in each field in May of 2015 and holds a PATH International riding certification. Lozen Hendrix is Happy Trails' new class/barn manager. She hails from central Oregon



and has an extensive equine background.

Judge Tyler Tharpe administers Oath to **Sutton & Hague LC** Attorney Anthony Guzman in Fresno office for admission to California Bar as SHLC staff look on. Congratulations Anthony!

The **Visalia Rawhide**, in conjunction with the California League, formally unveil the logo



for the 2017 California League All-Star festivities to be hosted by the Rawhide at Rawhide Ballpark June 19th through June 20th.

Janet is such a kind and generous woman! She tirelessly works to care for others, providing clothing, meals, and basic essentials to anyone in need. She has committed her life to caring and giving to others. So much so, that she has put her own needs last. In fact, this praiseworthy woman has spent 3 years without heat! When we received her nomination, we definitely agreed that she was very deserving! **Comfort Now Air Conditioning and Heating** was unable to fix the unit, due to the condition it was in. So we replaced the entire HVAC system with a new Daikin unit at no cost. Janet couldn't believe it and She cried tears of joy! It truly feels so great to be able to give back to this wonderful community that supports our business, and keeps us thriving!

THE LAW AT WORK

The Do's and Don'ts of Termination Meetings

Terminating an employee, while never an enjoyable experience, is sometimes necessary. Regardless of the reason for the termination, employers should be careful carrying out terminations. Employers often get into legal trouble with former employees because of how the termination took place, not why. One good practice to ensure that terminations are handled properly is to conduct a termination meeting.

There are certain steps employers should consider in carrying out a termination meeting. First, arrange for the meeting with the employee as soon as possible after the termination decision has been made, before rumors can spread and misinformation gets out making the process more difficult. Second, hold the meeting at a time and place that will ensure privacy and minimize interruptions. Third, to lessen the chance of conflict between the employee and supervisor, have someone other than the employee's immediate supervisor conduct the termination meeting, such as a Human Resources manager or the employee's department manager. Fourth, it's often beneficial to have a second manager or supervisor attend the termination meeting and serve as a witness, but not otherwise actively participate.

The person conducting the termination meeting should briefly state the issues that precipitated the meeting, taking time to review any prior discipline which supports the termination. Make sure that the employee is given accurate reasons for the termination – reasons given to the employee that are later proved incorrect will undermine



Brett T. Abbott
Gubler & Abbott LLP

the employer's defense if the employee sues the employer.

Be respectful, yet matter-of-fact with the employee. Do not allow the meeting to become argumentative. If the employee becomes argumentative or threatening, terminate the meeting and leave the room. Perhaps most importantly, be brief – the meeting should not last longer than 15 minutes. At the conclusion of the meeting, hand the employee a letter of termination, and briefly explain its contents. Be sure to provide the employee with documentation regarding the employee's unemployment benefit rights.

Finally, unless there is a valid fear of theft or destruction of company property, allow the employee to privately gather personal items and leave the premises. Employers who require that the terminated employee be "escorted" from the building or monitored while cleaning out his or her desk could increase their risk of a lawsuit. Remember, it's often how a termination is carried out that causes problems, not why.

This article is for education and information purposes only; it should not be construed as legal advice. If you have an employment law question for inclusion in a future article, contact Brett T. Abbott at Gubler & Abbott LLP (bta@thecalifornialawyers.com). For specific employment law advice or other legal assistance, contact Gubler & Abbott LLP, (559) 625-9600, 1110 N. Chinowith St., Visalia, CA 93291 (www.thecalifornialawyers.com). Read Mr. Abbott's blog on employment law issues at <http://work-law.blogspot.com>.

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Garth L Gipson



Gipson

Garth L. Gipson is a Financial Planner with Gateway Financial Planning Group - A financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. He has been a Chamber Board member for 6 months.

Why is it important to be a Chamber member? It's important to be active in your community. The Chamber is a great outlet for that, and we are doing great things to advocate for businesses here locally.

What brought you to Visalia? My wife and I grew up in the Central Valley and we both moved away for college. I went to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and loved living there. After we got married, we moved to San Diego while I was an officer in the Navy. After getting out of the Navy we decided to move back here to start a family. There isn't a better place for that.

What is your favorite thing about your job/company? My passion is working with small business owners and families to help them reach their financial goals. The vast majority of people have questions surrounding their financial future and whether or not they will be able to retire, or meet whatever goal they may have. Helping people work toward and reach those goals is incredibly fulfilling. Becoming a Certified Financial Planner™ earlier this year was a major milestone in my career, and something I am very proud of.

What do you like to do when you are not working? I have an amazing wife and three daughters that I love spending my time with. I also enjoy living an active lifestyle by working out and running. My wife calls me her social butterfly; I am involved in a lot of organizations including my church.

What is your best advice for young professionals? Be passionate and authentic about what it is you are trying to do. Also, be on time - it's easy...

American Cancer Society Is Looking For Volunteers

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of 2.5 million volunteers saving lives and fighting for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. As the largest voluntary health organization, the Society's efforts have contributed to a 22% decline in cancer death rates in the U.S. since 1991.

An estimated 158,000 California residents will learn they have cancer this year and getting to their scheduled treatment will be their greatest concern. To help cancer patients get to the critical care they need without additional stress, the American Cancer Society's Road To Recovery program can help by providing free transportation to and from treatment centers. Many patients don't own a vehicle, can't afford gas, or don't have access to public transportation. Some are elderly and unable to drive, too ill to drive, or have no local family members or friends who can help with all their transportation needs. Without access to reliable transportation, cancer patients are unable to get regular treatment. Even the best treatment can't work if a patient can't get there.

The American Cancer Society is in need of volunteers to cover all of the ride requests that are coming in for Tulare County. A majority of the ride requests we receive are for doctor's appointments during weekday hours and retired senior citizens have been stepping up to the plate to help. The program is only possible with volunteer drivers donating their time and using their own cars so patients can receive the lifesaving treatments they need.

To volunteer, all you need is a valid driver's license, a safe and reliable vehicle, and proof of insurance. Drivers must be at least 18 years old, under the age of 85 years old and have a good driving record. The Society conducts criminal background and driving record checks on all drivers, and provides free online training. Attached are fliers for the Road To Recovery program. Interested persons can call the 1-800-227-2345 to get started.

Donna Gavello
Program Manager, Mission Delivery
(559) 451-0163
Donna.gavello@cancer.org

Reflections of Italy

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will host a slideshow presentation on January 11, 2017 at 12:00 pm at the City Administration Building, 220 N. Santa Fe. The Chamber would like to invite you to come and learn about the Reflections of Italy tour which will take place September 6-15, 2017.

Revel in the magic of Italy on this 10-day tour that explores the cities of Rome, Florence, Siena, Venice, Assisi, Perugia and Milan. Travel the rolling hills of the scenic Tuscan and Umbrian countryside exploring medieval hill towns and visiting the birthplace of St. Francis, Assisi. Discover the masterpieces of the Renaissance in Florence and see hot glass transformed into exquisite art on Murano Island. Linger in romantic Venice for two nights discovering its treasures. Your journey comes to a close in Milan and includes a

visit to them magnificent Gothic Cathedral, the Duomo.

The Reflections of Italy includes airport shuttle service to the Fresno Airport as well as roundtrip airfare to Italy. The tour will last 10 days and include 13 meals. All hotel accommodations are at 4 star hotels and the entire tour will be led by an English speaking program manager/guide.

For more information about the Chamber travel program go to www.visaliachamber.org/travel.



SHRM of Tulare/Kings County Announces Legal Updates Event



Join the SHRM T/K Legislative Director, Faith Lisle Driscoll, as she reviews the new laws, regulations and judicial opinions affecting California employers in 2017. This training session will include:



- Increasing minimum wages
- Overtime pay for agricultural employees
- Expansion to the Equal Pay Act to race and ethnicity
- New restrictions on background checks
- Requirements for all-gender single user restrooms

Attendees will be provided with practical tips for applying the changes in the workplace and communicating them through employee handbook revisions. Bring your notepad and questions to get the most out of this session!

Bio: Faith Lisle Driscoll was born and raised in Fresno. She is a graduate of California State University, Fresno and holds a degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Entrepreneurship. She continued her education at San Joaquin College of Law, where she received her Juris Doctorate degree.

Her legal practice is concentrated in the areas of employment compliance and litigation. She assists employers in disputes involving claims of unpaid wages, discrimination, harassment, retaliation and wrongful termination.

Ms. Driscoll also drafts employment agreements and ensures employment handbooks are compliant with state and federal law. Additional areas of representation include general business litigation matters including breach of contract, torts and commercial collections.

Location: Visalia Marriott, 300 S. Court St.

Registration: 8:30 am - 9:00 am

Presentation: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

*Brunch will be provided

For questions, please contact Ashley Marroquin 559-651-4040 or email membership@shrmtularekings.org

Provost & Pritchard Opens Eighth Office Location in Merced

Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group announced they have opened the firm's eighth location in Merced, California. The new office's address is 3341 M Street, Merced, California 95348, and can be contacted at (209) 809-2300.



"The addition of the Merced office allows Provost & Pritchard to more efficiently offer engineering and consulting services to our current and future agricultural and municipal clients within the Merced County area," explained Ronald Samuelian, PE, Provost & Pritchard's president.

The opening of the new office includes two principal staff members who have lived and worked on projects in Merced for many years: Dena Traina, PE, ENV SP, a principal engineer, and Brad Samuelson, a principal environmental specialist.

"We are excited to have two principal staff to the quality of Dena and Brad to lead this office, and we look finding more people join our team to serve our clients in the area," said Samuelson.

Traina has been with Provost & Pritchard since 2012 and has over 35 years of experience in the planning and design, inspection, and construction of engineering structures. Her project experience includes water and wastewater treatment plants, floodwalls, communication facilities, and architectural and industrial buildings.

San Joaquin Valley /6

HEALTHCARE NOTE

Looking Back at a Historic Year for VMC

Visalia Medical Clinic
An affiliate of Kaweah Delta Medical Foundation *Be Well*

Written By **Richard Strid, MPA, CMPE**

Executive Director, Visalia Medical Clinic

The year 2016 will be remembered as a milestone year for Visalia Medical Clinic, for several reasons.

The physicians and staff collaborated to create a year of celebrations in honor of our 75th anniversary. The three physicians who started the practice in 1941, just before the attack on Pearl Harbor, would be amazed to see what that practice looks like today.

The celebration included a series of fun contests and prizes for the staff, a barbecue for staff, and a fun and educational health fair for the general public. Our physicians enjoyed a beautiful dinner, which allowed past physicians to meet the new, younger physicians who are the future of care at VMC.

We are grateful to the staff, spouses, and physicians for their help with this festive yearlong celebration.

The past year is also remarkable because it is the first year that VMC has been affiliated with the new Kaweah Delta Medical Foundation.

Much research, collaboration, and communication went into the decision to affiliate with the new foundation. The intent of the foundation was, and is, to help recruit physicians to our community



Rick Strid

CEO
Visalia Medical Clinic

and to allow physicians to focus on patient care – and leave the details of practice management to the foundation.

The foundation also allows for more efficient use of technology, particularly avoiding costly duplication of services.

And, physicians today want to work with a medical foundation because it frees them to focus on patient care. Staying abreast of changes within the industry will help us attract the attention of the best and brightest in health care.

This has been a significant change, but we believe that the partnership between the foundation and Visalia Medical Clinic is a benefit to our patients and the community.

This year also saw the addition of Dr. Jeffrey Hagen, a podiatrist, who cares passionately about the impact of diabetes on foot health, native Visalian Kimberly De Jong, FNP-C, who provides care in QuickCare, VMC's walk-in clinic, and we are pleased to welcome back Dr. Raul Perez, a very popular family medicine physician.

What does the future hold for VMC? While we can't know the future, we do know that VMC will focus on providing excellent care, delivered by highly qualified physicians, with the most state-of-the-art technology possible.

We also know that we couldn't do what we do without our patients. We are privileged to help you *Be Well*.




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Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) has always had a strong connection to the business community of Visalia. Visalia Partners in Education (VPIE) organization is just another fine example of an outstanding business and education partnership that supports students. VPIE is the umbrella organization, under which all business and industry partnerships occur. The organization is nearly 15 years old: but in recent years, has stepped up its efforts to support and advocate for education in the community of Visalia.

On January 19, 2017, Visalia Partners in Education and the Visalia Unified School District are hosting the second VPIE Partner Recognition Luncheon. The luncheon will be held at the Visalia Marriott and will begin at 12:30 PM. This event provides an opportunity for VUSD and VPIE to recognize outstanding partners from across the community who have given of themselves and/or their businesses to support education. It is our opportunity to say "Thank You" and recognize their amazing work.

The luncheon follows the last recruitment session for our Linked Learning Academies. This event is attended by all VUSD 8th graders and is held at the LJ Williams Theater. The recruitment begins at 11:00 AM and will conclude by 12:00 PM, leaving plenty of time to get to the Marriott.

We hope you can join us for this special luncheon and help us recognize a group of truly amazing Visalia Partners in Education.

Sincerely,

Todd Oto Ed.D.

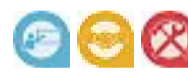
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Visalia Unified School District

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VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Elections, Funding and the Future

The recent election brought good news to school districts across the state, and Visalia Unified was no exception. Among the many propositions that voters considered in November were two measures that were particularly important for stability and growth for schools. Both Proposition 51 and Proposition 55 were approved, and I want to take a few moments to describe how these will have impact on Visalia Unified.

Proposition 51 helps us meet our commitment of providing safe and modern schools for kids. You will recall that Visalia voters approved Measure E in 2012. That measure provided us the ability to sell \$60.1 million in bonds, which we increased to \$60.6 million through favorable rates. These funds were used to modernize, improve, and make our school facilities safer. Projects were undertaken with Measure E funds across Visalia, including the new two-story academic building at Redwood High School, the construction of Ridgeview Middle School, numerous playground improvements and single-point of entry renovations for security at many schools.

When Measure E was passed, our plan was to apply for reimbursement from the state for a significant proportion of the funds raised through bonds so that the total amount available for all projects would increase to nearly \$130 million. The suspension of the reimbursement program at the state, however, placed this approach in jeopardy. Fortunately, the approval of Proposition 51 allows the state to issue up to \$9 billion in bonds to fund



**Todd Oto,
Ed.D.**
Superintendent, Visalia
Unified School District

improvements and new construction of schools. Those state bonds will allow us to receive the \$47 million reimbursement from the state for projects already completed and to finish the remaining projects originally envisioned under Measure E. This is a great outcome for our community and our schools.

The second measure, Proposition 55, offers us stability of school funding for the near future. Proposition 55 is an extension of current funding established by Proposition 30 in 2012 and does not represent new funding. It is a one to three percent increase from the current level, depending on income, on taxes paid by the approximately 1.5 percent of single Californians earning more than \$250,000 per year or \$500,000 for those filing jointly. What that means for Visalia Unified specifically is the prevention of the loss of \$15 million to VUSD's general fund. Such a decrease would mean significant cuts to programs at all levels and all schools, and would have greatly negative impact on our ability to provide opportunities for kids.

I know that support for both of these ballot measures was not universal in our community. Even so, on behalf of the VUSD Board of Trustees, staff, and students, I thank the community for its support of our schools. VUSD is proud of its contribution to our community and our culture. The condition of our campuses contributes to this overarching success and sense of pride. Together, we can accomplish much. These investments in education send a strong message that Visalians value education.



Rawhide Franchise And General Manager Honored At Winter Meetings

VISALIA, CA
The Visalia Rawhide, as announced by Minor League Baseball and Esurance, were named the inaugural 2016 Esurance Home Field Advantage Award winner, as well as General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft being honored as the California League "Women in Excellence" Award winner at the Winter Meetings in National Harbor, MD.

The Esurance Home Field Advantage Award honors the communities who best supported their hometown Minor League Baseball teams this season. One Minor League Baseball team in each of the 14 leagues has been named the Esurance Home Field Advantage Award winner based on the highest percentage capacity of the ballpark during the 2016 season.

Rawhide General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft was honored by the California League, in a vote by her peers, as the 2016 California League "Women in Excellence" Award winner. In 2007, Jennifer Pendergraft started as an Executive Assistant for the Visalia Oaks. She quickly fell in love with the town, Top of the Third ownership philosophies and what the ball club had planned for the future. After assisting with the ballpark renovation process & team rebranding, she was named Assistant GM in 2009.

Continued ball club growth led to Jennifer's promotion to General Manager after the conclusion of the 2012 season and it has not stopped. She has continued to build an outstanding brand of family entertainment at Recreation Park which, in 2016, set an all-time attendance record for the fifth time in seven years as 123,079 fans came through the turnstiles. Last year, the Rawhide won the California League's Excellence in Community Service Award. They achieved such an honor by Jennifer's leadership in making their community feel like they are a "Rawhide Family". The recent success of the Visalia Rawhide is due in no small part to Jen's dedication to the organization and the community of Visalia.

2017 marks the 71st year of baseball in Visalia at Recreation Ballpark and the 11th season as the Class-A Advanced affiliate of the Arizona Diamondback in the California League. For more information or tickets call **559-732-4433** or head to **Rawhidebaseball.com**. You can follow the Rawhide on Twitter (**@VisaliaRawhide**), Facebook (**TheRawhide**), Instagram (**@visaliarawhide**) and Snap Chat (**visaliarawhide**).



New Attorney at Gubler & Abbott LLP



Alcazar

Gubler & Abbott LLP is pleased to announce that Esperanza L. Alcazar has joined the firm as an Associate Attorney.

Ms. Alcazar served in the U.S. Army at Fort Bliss, Texas as a paralegal from 2004 to 2008. She went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in psychology and Master's degree in academic research in social psychology from Humboldt State University, where she was a presidential scholar and received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award. While completing her undergraduate and graduate education she volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate.

She then earned a Juris Doctor degree from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law where she graduated with distinction. She also studied abroad at Oxford University, and worked as a law clerk at Disability Rights Ohio, the Office of the Ohio Attorney General, and Student Legal Services. She was designated as a Public Service Fellow with Recognition due to her extensive pro bono work while in law school.

Ms. Alcazar's practice will have an emphasis in family law, immigration law, commercial litigation, creditors' rights, and labor law.



Suncrest Bank Completes Acquisition of Security First Bank

Merger creates approximately \$460 million Central Valley franchise
Suncrest also completes private placement of \$7 million of common stock

Suncrest Bank announced that it has completed its acquisition of Security First Bank in Fresno, CA. The acquisition, which was first announced on September 1st, 2016, was concluded following receipt of shareholder approval for the transaction from the shareholders of Security First Bank and all required regulatory approvals. As of September 30, 2016, Suncrest Bank had \$353 million in total assets and Security First Bank had \$104 million in total assets.

In addition, Suncrest Bank also announced today that it has completed a private placement of \$7.0 million of the bank's common stock. As a part of the offering, the Company issued 678,788 shares, at a purchase price of \$8.25 per share, to Castle Creek Capital Partners VI, L.P. for a total investment of \$5.6 million, and 169,698 shares, at a purchase price of \$8.25 per share, to two of the bank's Directors for a total investment of \$1.4 million.

"We are delighted to have completed our second acquisition in

a year, and are excited about the opportunity to grow our business in the Fresno market," said Ciaran McMullan, President and CEO of Suncrest Bank. "We set ourselves the ambitious goal of growing to \$500 million in total assets within five years, and with the completion of this deal we have effectively achieved that target, two years ahead of schedule," added McMullan.

"I am excited to be joining a management team with a demonstrated ability to execute on its plans, and a genuine passion for local community banking," said Steve Jones, formerly the President and CEO of Security First Bank and now Chief Operating Officer of Suncrest Bank. "I am looking forward to leading the further development of Suncrest's operations and technology infrastructure, its risk management and compliance capability, and its new product development function," he added.



Revisions To EEO-1 Filing For 2017

The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission ("EEOC") has updated the format and information employers are required to report on the EEO-1 report for 2017 reporting. The final rule, which was announced on September 29, 2016, creates significant additional requirements for employers to report in filling out the EEO-1 survey.

The EEO-1 is a confidential compliance survey that traditionally collected information on sex, gender, ethnicity, and job type. The EEO-1 survey was required to be filled out by all employers with 100 or more employees in an employer selected pay period (between October 1 and December 31), and for federal government contractors with 50 or more employees and a prime contract or first-tier subcontract amounting to \$50,000 or more.

The updated EEO-1 requires employers to report additional information to help the EEOC identify pay disparities and discriminatory practices based on gender, race, or ethnicity, and will require employers to report information on employees' pay, including information from the employees' W-2s. Employers must now also report the wage information in a scaled approach based on 12 separate "pay bands," which requires the employer to report the

total number of employees, the total hours worked, and the total wages earned in aggregate for all employees in each pay band. The total employees in each pay band will further be broken down into separate categories of gender and ethnicity.

What This Means for Employers:

The revised EEO-1 survey with the additional information requirements begins with the 2017 calendar year. Although employers are not required to submit the updated EEO-1 form for 2017 until March 31, 2018, employers should begin tracking the required additional information as soon as possible to avoid any issues with collecting the additional data. Employers should also train administrative staff to identify pay gaps based on gender or ethnicity to prevent any actions from the EEOC to enforce federal pay discrimination laws.

The goal of this article is to provide employers with current labor and employment law information. The contents should neither be interpreted as, nor construed as legal advice or opinion. The reader should consult with Barsamian & Moody at (559) 248-2360 or toll-free at (888) 322-2573, for individual responses to questions or concerns regarding any given situation.



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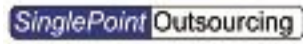
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CALENDAR - JANUARY 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 The Business of Pot 210 Café 7:30 - 9:00 am	11 Reflections of Italy Slide Show Presentation 220 N. Santa Fe 12:00 pm	12 Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice Slide Show Presentation 220 N. Santa Fe 12:00 pm	13	14
15	16 Visalia City Council Meeting	17	18	19 VPIE Luncheon Visalia Marriott 12:00 pm	20	21
22	23	24	25 Stop Sexual Harassment Seminar 7:30 am Lamp Liter Inn	26 Chamber Ambassador Breakfast 8:00 am Visalia First Assembly	27	28
29	30	31				

Trish Arnold Attends LPL Financial's Women Advisors Leaders Forum

Trish Arnold recently attended LPL Financial's inaugural Women Advisors Leaders Forum, an invitation-only conference for top female advisors hosted by LPL Financial a leading retail investment advisory firm and the nation's largest independent broker/dealer*. Trish Arnold is supported by the LPL platform.

Hosted in Carlsbad, Calif., more than 100 female advisors, LPL executives and industry leaders convened at the forum with the goal to further empower some of the top women advisors in the industry. The conference provided opportunities to network, share best practices and create a community to help women advisors succeed. Advisors attended sessions covering a range of topics to help them manage and grow their businesses, and heard from industry leaders and sponsors on trends and insights impacting the financial services industry. The keynote speaker was Judy Smith,

founder and president of leading crisis communications firm, Smith & Company, author of "Good Self, Bad Self," and inspiration for the hit television show "Scandal."

"As a business owner, my number one priority is serving the needs of my clients," said Arnold. "By taking the opportunity to attend LPL's women's forum, I am able to gather best practices from other successful women advisors and demonstrate my commitment to supporting my clients as we work together toward their financial goals. It was also wonderful to see the representation of diversity in our industry and to appreciate that being an independent financial advisor with LPL is empowering to our success as women professionals."

*Based on total revenues, Financial Planning magazine, June 1996-2016

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California Public Utilities Commission Sets Rates For 2017-2019 For California Water Service

The California Public Utilities (Commission) issued its decision on California Water Service's (Cal Water) required, triennial review of its operations, expenses, rates, and needed water system improvements. In its decision, the Commission authorizes Cal Water to invest \$6.29 million in infrastructure improvements in the Visalia service area over the next three years.

The decision enables Cal Water to make water system improvements necessary to continue providing safe and reliable water service to its customers, according to District Director Jim Smith. Among the improvements Cal Water will be able to make are: replacement of 19,341 feet of aging and high-risk water main, replacement of aging meters to ensure accurate measurement of water use, and replacement of hardware and upgrading of software for monitoring and controlling the water system.

For the typical residential customer using 14,212 gallons, or 19 Ccf, of water per month, the monthly water bill will decrease by

\$0.03 in 2017, and then increase by \$0.51 (2 cents per day) in 2018 and by \$0.94 (3 cents per day) in 2019. New water rates go into effect Jan. 1, 2017.

The Commission's decision comes after an 18-month review process in which Cal Water's operations and books are thoroughly audited; it adopts the proposed decision issued in November 2016 by an Administrative Law Judge and settlement achieved in September 2016 among Cal Water, the Commission's Office of Ratepayer Advocates, and other parties to the case. Water utilities regulated by the Commission, an independent state agency, are required to file such a rate review application every three years to ensure that water rates accurately reflect the costs to provide service. The next required review of rates will be filed in July 2018.

Cal Water customers will receive more details about approved water system improvements and the rate changes in their January 2017 bills.

Provost & Pritchard (continued from page 4)

A registered civil engineer in California, Nevada, Arizona, and Ohio, Traina holds a master's degree in construction management and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of California, Berkeley. Samuelson joined the Provost & Pritchard team in 2016 and has 20 years of experience guiding projects through environmental regulatory processes. He is skilled in the management and preparation of environmental documents, and is experienced working with local, state and federal agencies to ensure project success. Samuelson previously spent many years at University of California, Merced as their director of environmental planning, and led the effort to obtain their federal and state permits. He is currently providing consulting services to clients within Merced County and the surrounding area to prepare for compliance with California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).