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Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

UPCOMING EVENTS

- FEBRUARY 22:**
Learn Quickbooks in a Day
8:30 - 4:30 pm
Brandman University
Reservations Requested
Cost: Free
<http://visaliachamber-dev.chambermaster.com/events/calendar/2017-02-01>
- FEBRUARY 23:**
Ambassador Meeting
8:00 - 9:00 am
Visalia First Assembly Church
- FEBRUARY 28:**
Business After Hours
5:30 - 7:30 pm
Park 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 19 – 23, 2017
- Reflections of Italy**
September 5 – 11, 2017
- China**
October 6 – 14, 2017
- Christmas at the Galt House and Opry Land Hotel**
December 2017

Collette Vacations
Mayflower Tours
Cistline

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

BP Quality Paint & Body, Inc. Earns Official Certification and Prestigious Top Automaker Recognition



BP Quality Paint & Body, Inc. has been officially Certified by Assured Performance, a non-profit consumer advocacy organization for maintaining the right tools, equipment, training, and facility necessary to repair the participating Automaker brand vehicles according to the manufacturer's specifications. In achieving their Certification, BP Quality Paint & Body, Inc. is now an integral part of the most advanced repair capable and efficient auto body repair network in the world. Adding to their credentials, BP Quality Paint & Body, Inc. is officially recognized by Assured Performance, GM, FCA, Nissan, and Hyundai.

BP Quality Paint /4

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

40 Years of Safety in Visalia

written by Nicola Wissler, Visalia Chamber of Commerce



40 years ago in 1977 KRC opened its doors and began providing roadside safety with just a few lighted barricades. Today KRC Safety has grown to be what owner Gary Castro calls KRC Safety "Super-Sized".

Many of you might say I have no idea what KRC Safety does, but Gary Castro would tell you to just take a look around, and you will see his company everywhere. Any time there is road construction, any time there is utility work being done, the cones, lights and barricades that you see are all put in place by KRC Safety. All over the state of California, KRC safety provides equipment rentals, traffic control, permanent and street signs, message boards, chain link fence, equipment trucking, generators and light towers. Each of these items allows for city workers, utility companies and construction companies to complete their work in a safe way, both for the workers and the public. In addition to providing the safety equipment you see on the roads, KRC Safety is involved with developing traffic plans, and the permitting process that their clients must go through in order to get the job done. More than anything else, the focus for KRC Safety is to make every work site safe for everyone affected.



When Gary refers to KRC Safety as being Super-Sized he is referring to being a diverse company. Along with safety equipment, KRC Safety grown to include a full graphics/print shop on premise. Graphic designers work with local business owners to create new signs, they have a full time seamstress that manages the embroidery machines, they print t-shirts, wrap vehicles and even have a contractors store when local contractors and purchase items such as hard hats, shovels and other equipment.

Like many companies who have been in business for multiple generations KRC Safety has seen a lot of changes to the industry. Many of the changes have been based on available funding for agencies like Cal Trans. The more funding the state provides for road construction and repair the more Cal Trans will use safety companies like KRC Safety. Another trend in the industry is going paperless. Bids for any job with the State of California or state agencies are now done electronically which is very different from the paper process in the past.

KRC Safety is a multigenerational family owned business and today

the third generation of Castro's are working at the facility along with 90 other employees. Celebrating 40 years of business this year Gary noted that one of the keys to the company's success is "Always doing the right thing". No matter what, a company should always take responsibility for their mistakes and do whatever is necessary to right the situation. It is a way of doing business that every member of the KRC Safety team is expected to be on board with. "Accountability, quality service and hard work are the core of who we are at KRC Safety", noted Castro. "We still do business with some of the same people we began working with 40 years ago and that means a lot to us, we have strong relationships with our customers and a strong feeling of ownership in the community."

The connection with the local community is one of the reasons that KRC Safety was named Large Business of the Year in 2016. The community is lucky to have companies like KRC Safety who are so invested and committed to making Visalia great, but Gary will tell you that KRC Safety is the lucky one. "To be able to give to our community is a blessing to us, it allows us to help those around us and reminds us that we are lucky to be in a position to give". Each year KRC Safety donates more than 1% of the gross receipts to non-profit organizations including but not limited to: Tulare County Fair, Valley Oak SPCA, St. Paul's School, Hands in the Community, Toys for Tots of Fresno & Tulare County, Visalia Emergency Aid Council and the Visalia Rescue Mission. In addition to the financial and in-kind donations made every year KRC Safety encourages their employees to give back to the community as well. Through the KRC Cares program employees are encouraged to volunteer with their families in the community.

The Chamber would like to thank KRC Safety for their commitment to the community and their continued commitment to providing safety for Visalia residents and workers. Congratulations on 40 year and we wish them continued success in the future.



Leadership Visalia links "Utopia", Buses, and Warehouses to Visalia's Growth

Written By Eric Anderson, Anderson Percussive, Leadership Visalia Student



This month's Leadership Visalia day session delved into city planning, and the way the city transit system and the industrial park propel Visalia's growth and development. The class met up with City Councilman Greg Collins, Josh McDonnell, Assitant Director/City Planner, and Devon Jones, City of Visalia Economic Development Director to start the day discovering the challenges and complexities of planning how Visalia grows and develops.

Greg, Josh, and Devon shared some history of Visalia's growth, and their unique perspectives on its current status and expectations. This was no mere talk fest. They prepared the class members to plan different versions of "Utopia." The class divided into teams and designed a city based on the map and information provided. It was an eye-opening experience once the class members considered all the variables to city design. One team won the competition, and its members won a complementary meal at Bravo Farms. That came in real handy because that is where the class ate lunch. After lunch, the class discovered how the transit system supports Visalia's growth and development.

Judith Weese greeted the class at Visalia's Transit Maintenance and Operations Facility. She gave a thorough overview of the transit system's daily operations schedule as well as the facility's responsibilities to keep all the

vehicles on schedule. Judith led the class on a walking tour of "the yard" to help put all the numbers in perspective. Technology's impact on the transit system was the highlight of the tour. Buses have wifi, plus numerous tech upgrades that improve operations and management without increasing manpower. A vibrant, reliable transit system appeals to people who consider moving to Visalia.

Industrial Park plays a large role in attracting businesses to our city.

Bruce Nicotero welcomed the class at Jo-Ann Stores West Coast Distribution Center. He shared that industrial park location was a big reason Jo-Ann Stores put a distribution center in Visalia: its geographic location guarantees overnight delivery to most stores in the western states.

He escorted the class through the warehouse's vast expanse, describing how bulk shipments enter the building's north end to be split apart and shelved in the warehouse. Warehouse personnel assemble store-specific orders and send them to the building's south end where they're loaded on trucks for delivery.

Warehouses, Bus Yards, and "Utopia" seem to have nothing in common until Leadership Visalia gets involved. Then, such ideas typify how the city's growth and development plans attract peoples and businesses around the nation.



VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS



Business-Government



Business Relations



Promoting Community



Strong Local Economy

CASA Superhero Fun Run

CASA of Tulare County is organizing the First Annual "Superhero Fun Run" March 11th 2017 at the Valley Oaks Golf Course in Visalia. The event starts at 7:00am. There will be a 5k Run and 1k Walk. We will also be featuring the 0.0k "Instant Gratification Run" for those who want the swag without the sweat! Come out in your favorite superhero costume, real or invented! There will be prizes for best invented and real superhero costumes, for adults and children. We have partnered with Sole to Soul and Go For It Events, to make registration and chipping the race as convenient and accurate as possible. Every runner receives a t-shirt, and cape. Details can be found on our website and you can register at: <https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Visalia/CASAtulare>. Sponsorships are still available, call 559-625-4007 for more information. The race will be to raise awareness and support prevention of child abuse. There will be informational booths and fun for the whole family!

Rawhide "Host Family" Program One of the Best in the Nation

Fans that attend a Rawhide game witness on-field action by some of the most talented baseball players in the world. Ask folks who have been around long enough and they will tell stories of watching Hall of Famer Kirby Puckett work his way through Visalia on his ascension to the big leagues. In more recent years, and paired with a strong relationship with the Arizona Diamondbacks, now well-established big leaguers such as Paul Goldschmidt, Adam Eaton, David Peralta, and Jake Lamb have spent at least parts of a summer or two in our community. While their on-field performance is what brings Recreation Ballpark crowds to their feet, most people aren't aware of what happens when the game is done and it's time to go home. Where, exactly, is home for these boys?

Home is within the care of Rawhide host families. In recent years, the host family program has grown from five families to around 20 or so. Most of these families host more than one player or coach at a time, and what do they ask in return for opening their home to these professional baseball players? "A simple thank you usually does the trick," says Host Family Program coordinator and Rawhide Assistant GM Charlie Saponara. "These families are nothing short of amazing," Saponara continues. "On top of a clean and comfortable living area, most of our host families are happy to provide food, or even a ride to the ballpark if needed. Their generosity and kindness is extraordinary."

For the past few seasons, 100-percent of Rawhide players, coaches, and training staff, have been hosted by local families. That number exemplifies the giving spirit of the community here in Visalia. Hosting ballplayers is not a thankless task. Some players develop truly caring relationships with their host families, and those relationships endure into the big leagues.

In just a few months, a group of about 30 professional baseball players, coaches, and training staff, will once again make their way to Visalia. And, once again, they will have a happy home waiting for them when they get here. Interested in more information about the Rawhide Host Family Program? Email: charlie@rawhidebaseball.com

About this publication ...

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We Are Your Business Consultant on Retainer

"There were more obstacles than I ever thought there would be. Once I tackled one, another one would pop up and they were things I never thought about." A business owner shared this statement with me recently. She was excited her business was growing and relocating to a bigger space, but that growth brought challenges. "I'm an expert in my business. Clearly I'm good, I've out grown my space, but the questions that I am now facing because of that success are one of my biggest challenges." I've had this conversation before with other business owners. They are amazing at the thing their company does but add in human resources, zoning and ordinance changes, state law, marketing and a whole lot of other things to the list of items a business owner deals with, and they get frustrated. I was thankful a colleague referred her to chat with our Chamber. "[The colleague] said the Visalia Chamber was a fantastic resource, a place to start to figure all this out." As with any business, referrals are the best kind of business.

When I was hired with the Chamber two and half years ago, I spent a fair amount of time asking nonmembers what they thought the Chamber does. Those answers, ribbon cuttings and networking mixers, only touched the surface of what I have discovered is the

real and enduring work of the Chamber. We, at the Chamber, serve our members as a "business consultant on retainer".

In short we're a resource, a partner, a voice for the collective business community to create a positive business climate while supporting Visalia.

When a business wants to celebrate a win, victory or reaches a new milestone, we're there. When a business needs help getting to the next level, we partner with them to reach that goal. When a business wants to get more involved in our community, we connect them to Visalia. We are the resource and solutions department for our members.

If you own a business or are a leader in your company, you don't have to do business alone. The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is here to partner with you. We look forward to helping you, serving as a resource and celebrating your successes. If you have ever thought about joining the Visalia Chamber, this is the year. Big things are happening and we are excited to have your business become a member.



Gail Zurek
President & CEO
Visalia Chamber of Commerce

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.

- **ASSISTANCE SERVICE DOG EDUCATIONAL CENTER**
Environment/Animals
559-564-7297
- **PLANET FITNESS**
Health/Nutrition
480-227-8727

- **UNITEDAG HEALTH & WELLNESS CLINIC IN VISALIA**
Health
559-967-0147
- **CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING**
Religious
559-625-2441

Renewing

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

- Innovation Commercial Flooring
- AMVETS Department of California*

- Fairfield Inn Visalia/Sequoia Gateway*
- Lagomarsino Group
- 4 Creeks, Inc.
- CIGNA*
- Gubler & Abbott LLP
- Soropimist International of Visalia*
- Darlene Loose / RE/MAX - Visalia
- Martin & Martin Properties LLC*
- Ouzonian Properties

*Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber 110% Club.

International Agri-Center Prepares For 50TH Anniversary Of World Ag Expo

The largest annual agricultural exposition of its kind, World Ag Expo boasts more than 1,500 exhibitors displaying cutting-edge agricultural technology and equipment on 2.6 million square feet of exhibit space. A record-setting 106,349 people came from 47 states and 79 countries to attend 2016 World Ag Expo.

The World Ag Expo Arena will once again offer daily Equipment Showcases, where exhibitors will perform live demonstrations of their latest products. Seminars will be offered in a variety of categories, including dairy, irrigation, international trade, business and farm management, marketing and media, and general agriculture. These seminars are presented by professionals in the industry and provide attendees with valuable information to improve their operations.

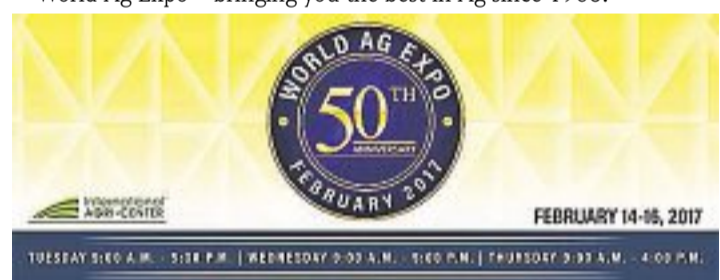
"World Ag Expo has built a 50-year legacy of bringing agricultural buyers and sellers together," says Jerry Sinift, International Agri-Center's Chief Executive Officer. "Ag is always evolving in order to feed a growing world. World Ag Expo is here to facilitate the connections between the exhibitors who provide the most advanced technology and equipment and the farmers who continue to evaluate and improve their operations to meet that demand."

The 2017 World Ag Expo will host daily 50th anniversary celebration

events, including the Wednesday evening Bud Light After-Hours Party in the Arena, with a free concert by Parmalee and fireworks to commemorate the golden anniversary.

World Ag Expo attendees can get the latest news, information and updates about the show by downloading the new 2017 mobile app. The free app provides mobile access to the schedule of events, an exhibitor directory, map of the show grounds and other visitor resources. The app is available for download from the app store by searching "World Ag Expo 2017."

For a full schedule of events, more information about the show or to purchase tickets for 2017 World Ag Expo, visit www.WorldAgExpo.org. World Ag Expo—bringing you the best in Ag since 1968.



Local Business Mentors and Sponsors Step-Up for Young Entrepreneurs

Volunteers Help YEA! Students in Business Planning Process

Everyone who has ever started a business will tell you that having a mentor, someone in your corner, someone you can turn to when you hit a road block, is an integral piece to making your business venture a success. This month the YEA! program introduced the students to their new business mentors. The mentors are members of the business community who have volunteered to assist the students as they refine their business idea, finalize their business plan and prepare to pitch their business venture to a panel of local investors.

This year's mentors include:

- Jonathan Graves, Jonathan Graves Management
- Samantha Rummage-Mathias, Wyndham Hotel
- Shauna Guerro, Rabobank
- Lupe Garcia, Suncrest Bank
- Cesear Gutierrez, Suncrest Bank
- Steve Batty, Diamond V
- Vincent Salinas, Small Business Development Center

Each of the Business Mentors will help the students to think outside of the box, work through financial spreadsheets and come up with a marketing plan. The YEA! program would like to thank each of the mentors for the time that they have committed to helping

our students become more successful.

As a non-profit organization, YEA! relies on the generosity of the community and of sponsors; people who identify with entrepreneurship and want to help pave the way for future entrepreneurs. Some help the student businesses get off the ground while others provide in-kind support or volunteer their time and services.

The Visalia YEA! program would like to thank the following companies for their sponsorship this year.

- Innovate Tulare/Kings
- Suncrest Bank
- ServiceMaster by Benevento
- Buckman-Mitchell Inc.
- Tulare Kings Linked Learning Consortium
- Wyndham Visalia
- Innovation Commercial Flooring
- Visalia Sunset Rotary
- McDonald & Associates
- Tulare County Federal Credit Union
- Sterling & Smith Funeral Home
- Planing Mill Pizzeria
- Goodies Cookies
- Rabobank
- Aurora Consulting Group

During the course of the 30-week program, more than 40 local businesses become involved with YEA! at various levels. From helping teach the basics of business to inviting students to tour their companies, volunteers participate in a variety of capacities. Students work in close cooperation with local business leaders, community leaders and educators who use their personal experiences to demonstrate how to develop ideas and objectives, pitch potential investors, obtain funding, register with governmental agencies, establish e-commerce and a web presence, and more. By the end of the class, students own and operate fully-formed and functioning businesses, which they can carry on after their graduation from the program.



GROUNDBREAKING • GRAND OPENING • RIBBON CUTTING • CEREMONIES



Ribbon Cutting

Recovery Credit Repair
525 W. Main St. Suite C-5 • 559-372-2823



Ribbon Cutting

United-Ag Health & Wellness Clinic - Visalia
315 South Johnson St. • 559-967-0147



Ground Breaking

F.I.T. Tribe Academy
3362 S. Fairway • 559-799-6870

Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Central Valley, Inc. We are extremely thankful for our partners and friends at VF Outdoor! They generously donated \$30,000 to help kickstart the new year! THANK YOU for making a difference in hundreds of families lives this year!

The **Visalia Rawhide** announced that the club will be holding its annual Job Fair at Rawhide Ballpark (300 N Giddings St in Visalia) on February 11th from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Positions will be available in a variety of areas, including concessions, food preparation, retail, and ushering. The club expects over 100 Tulare and Kings County residents to earn jobs, which will provide workers with valuable experience in the customer service industry.

Congratulations to **M. Green and Company**, they recently acquired another CPA firm (Morris, Sprague, Groen & Neese)

The **Kaweah Delta Health Care District** Board of Directors has launched a national search for Kaweah Delta's next chief executive officer. The board has retained Witt/Kieffer, a national firm, to begin the process of identifying a successor to CEO Lindsay Mann. The recruiter will look inside and outside the company for the hospital district's next leader. The search is expected to take several months.



Congratulations to Chamber Board Member Patrick Salazar who celebrated his 25th anniversary with **State Farm Insurance** this month.



Golden State Family Services would like to thank **Tachi Palace Hotel & Casino** for their generous donation to the GSFS "Kids Fund"



CASA of Tulare County would like to say a special thank you to Jim Vidak and the **Tulare County Office of Education** for their generous donation. Thank you for making a difference for the CASA children we serve.

Habitat for Humanity of Tulare County would like to thank Spirit 88.9 and the Naz Church for helping with one of the rehab projects and helping to trip back some very overgrown trees in the yard.



Congratulations to Jason DeWitt, he was named Officer of the year by the **Visalia Police Department**.

THE LAW AT WORK

Is an "on-call" rest break really a break?

One of the toughest pitfalls for employers to avoid are meal and rest breaks. I've covered the basics of meal and rest breaks in the past, but the law seems to be changing rapidly in this arena. A new case decided by the California Supreme Court makes a new change.



In *Augustus v. ABM Security Services, Inc.*, the California



Brett T. Abbott
Gubler & Abbott LLP

Supreme Court held that the same standard that applies to off-duty **meal breaks** applies to paid **rest break** time. The meal break law is that during unpaid, off-duty meal breaks, employees must be relieved of all duties and free from employer control as to how they spend their time. The Court has now held that this is also true for **paid rest break time**, and that an employer does not comply with the law if it requires employees to remain "on-call," or available for possible interruption during rest breaks. The court reasoned as follows:

"Employees forced to remain on-call during a 10-minute rest period must fulfill certain duties: carrying a device or otherwise making arrangements so the employer can reach the employee during a break, responding when the employer seeks contact with the employee, and performing other work if the employer so requests. These obligations are irreconcilable with employees' retention of freedom to use rest periods for their own purposes... An employee on call cannot take a brief walk — five minutes out, five minutes back — if at the farthest extent of the walk he or she

is not in a position to respond. Employees similarly cannot use their 10 minutes to take care of other personal matters that require truly uninterrupted time — like pumping breast milk or completing a phone call to arrange child care."

Whether the Court's analysis makes sense or not, it is now the law. This means that any policy requiring an employee to remain on-call (or perform any work whatsoever) during a rest break is now illegal. Furthermore, any policy that results in the employer maintaining "control" over the employee during a rest break is also not permissible. The penalty for violating

an employee's right to an uninterrupted rest (or meal) break is one hour of pay for a missed break, or in the case of an interrupted break, to allow the employee to re-start the break without interruption.

On the bright side for employers, the Court did acknowledge that policies requiring the employees to remain on the premises are still allowed.

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. Chinowth St., Visalia, CA 93291 (www.thecalifornialawyers.com).



CITY UPDATE

Exciting Developments for 2017

A new year brings many things to our fair City, and with 2017 comes exciting developments where the City's General Plan is concerned.

A peek into the past reminds us that the City Council approved a comprehensive update to Visalia's General Plan in October 2014. The General Plan serves as the City's primary policy document for regulating new development, it's the Planning Division's constitution, and is a key tool for influencing the quality of life. The 2014 Update will continue to guide Visalia's growth for the next 20 plus years.

There are several key components of the General Plan, one of which is an emphasis on Downtown as the business and governmental center of the community. This past year brought the new overlay district that allows microbrewery and micro-winery businesses to open in the east downtown area and Downtown is planned to extend further eastward over time.

Mooney Boulevard remains Tulare County's regional retail hub and this vital stretch drew big names in 2016, including HomeGoods and DSW. Plans are for further development to the south, as Visalia continues to be a key player in bringing new retail businesses to the



Warren Gubler
Mayor
City of Visalia

area. Additionally, the Industrial Park was recently expanded and has space for future, major employment centers. Council will continue to work with City staff and companies looking for the perfect location in the heart of the state.

Housing continues to grow and the City completed and adopted its Housing Element Update in September 2016.

There is land identified in all four quadrants of the City for future residential and neighborhood commercial development, and numbers on housing permits have been on the rise.

2017 is a new chapter for Visalia and represents an opportunity for community engagement and sound decision making in growth and development. I encourage citizens to be a part of the process, whether it be through a Committee or Commission, or by attending City Council meetings. As we work together, Visalia will continue to thrive.

To view the City's General Plan, visit www.visalia.city/generalplan. To contact Mayor Gubler directly, email him at warren.gubler@visalia.city.



BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Caity Meader



Caity Meader is the Executive Director of Family Services of Tulare County. She has been a Chamber Board member since June, 2016.

Why is it important to be a Chamber member? Being part of the Visalia Chamber is one of the best ways to network and connect with other local companies in our community. As a Chamber member, you receive access to a professional consultant to help you solve business problems, you find a place to learn something new about our professional community, and can gain exposure for your company or organization.

What brought you to Visalia? I was born and raised in Visalia but left to San Diego to attend college at San Diego State University. I returned here after thirteen years down south to join the team at Family Services to and be closer to my family!

What is your favorite thing about your job/company? I have worked at many nonprofits over the years and the staff at Family Services is truly second-to-none. Their commitment to the individuals and families we serve is unparalleled. We deal with a lot of difficult issues, but our staff faces every day with positive attitudes and a great deal of integrity. I am so proud to be part of this organization.

What is your favorite quote? One of my favorite quotes is: "When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed." – Maya Angelou

Kellie Pickler To Perform In Visalia!



Pickler

Dynamic country music star, Kellie Pickler, is scheduled to perform in Visalia on Saturday, March 18, 2017 at the historic Fox Theater.

Kellie Pickler grew up immersed in country music in the small town of Albemarle, North Carolina with the words of Tammy Wynette, Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, and Dolly Parton shaping her musical footing. At the age of 19, she first gained fame as a contestant on the fifth season of "American Idol." She has gone on to release four critically acclaimed albums, including her Gold-certified debut *Small Town Girl* as well as *100 Proof*, which Rolling Stone named the Best Country Album of 2011. Among her best known hits are the Gold-certified "Red High Heels," "I Wonder," "Best Days of Your Life," "Don't You Know You're Beautiful," "Things That Never Cross a Man's Mind," "Didn't You Know How Much I Loved You," and "No Cure for Crazy."

In spring of 2013, Pickler partnered with dance coach Derek Hough and won the Mirror Ball Trophy on ABC's "Dancing with the Stars." That same year, she also released her fourth album, *The Woman I Am*, with Black River Entertainment, which featured three songs co-written by Pickler including the title cut.

Her CMT docu-comedy series "I Love Kellie Pickler," which co-stars her husband, songwriter/producer Kyle Jacobs, debuted in November 2015, propelling the network to its highest premiere with adults since 2012 and women since 2008. The hit television series returned for a second season in August 2016.

Pickler is an avid supporter of the U.S. military, having completed ten USO Tours thus far. For more information, please visit www.kelliepickler.com.

Sponsoring organization, Hands in the Community, joins the hand of the helper to the hand of the needy. In Tulare County, the faith-based, government funded, private and public resources exist to address crisis and short term needs. The unique strategy of Hands in the Community is to join with these providers in targeting and delivering help to those in need.

Seats for the Kellie Pickler concert are \$40, \$62 and \$83 and can be reserved at www.foxvisalia.org or 308 W. Main St., Visalia.





BP Quality Paint

(continued from page 1)

To become Certified and officially recognized by the various Automakers, BP Quality Paint & Body, Inc. passed the rigorous Certification process essential to help ensure a proper and safe repair of the new generation of advanced vehicles. Less than 5 percent of body shops across the nation are able to meet the stringent requirements to become officially Certified and recognized. The Certified network is made up exclusively of best-in-class collision repair businesses that have met or exceeded the stringent requirements of the Certification program.

According to BP Quality Paint & Body, Inc. Owner, Brooks Lemons, "This certification supports our reputation for superior customer service serving our community. We are your neighbors and friends, so it is important to provide our customers with the peace of mind that their vehicles are being repaired correctly by highly trained professionals that care about them."

The Certification criteria is based upon auto manufacturer requirements. These are critical to ensure the vehicle fit, finish, durability, value and safety following an accident. As new model vehicles are being introduced that use light weight high strength materials and advanced technology, a proper repair according to manufacturer specification is even more important than ever to ensure the passenger safety and proper performance of the vehicle. Auto manufacturers want to ensure that consumers have the option of Certified Collision Repair wherever they live, work, or travel.

"Consumers need the confidence and peace of mind to know their vehicle is repaired by a shop that has what it takes to ensure the vehicle safety. BP Quality Paint & Body, Inc. is officially a Collision Care Provider™," said Scott Biggs, CEO of Assured Performance Collision Care. "They represent the standard by which all other body shops are measured."

Applications Now Available for Read For Life 'Pass The Word' Scholarship



VISALIA - Applications are now available for Tulare County high school seniors to apply for the Pass the Word Scholarship which is awarded by Read for Life.

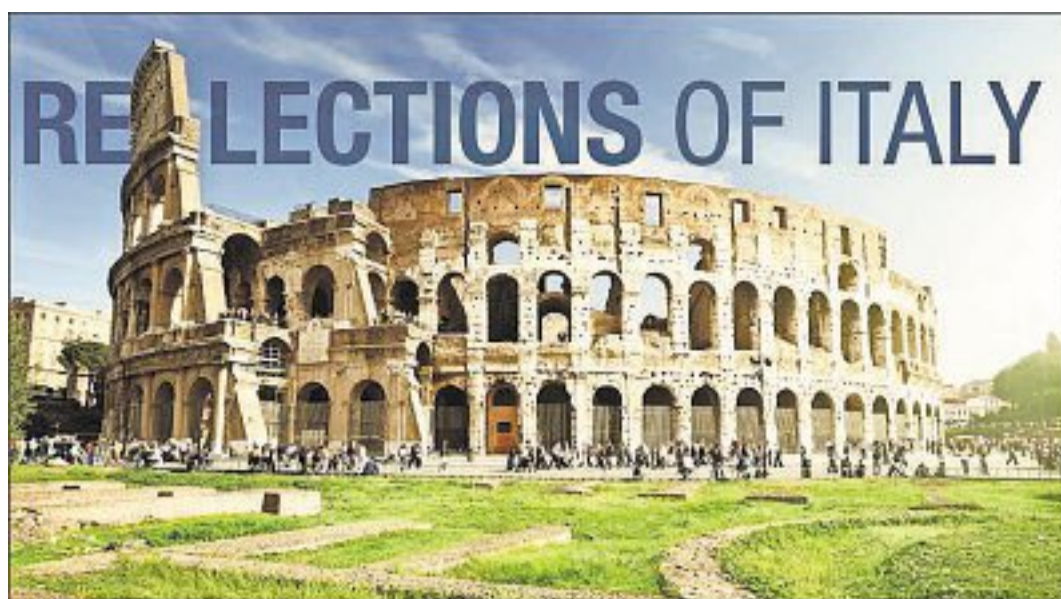
Last year's recipient, Caitlin Phelps of Tulare, was awarded the \$500 scholarship for her work in leading the St. Aloysius Parish Book Drive for the last three years. Read for Life annually awards the "Pass the Word" scholarship to an outstanding Tulare County high school senior who has served their community by volunteering to promote literacy.

Since its start in 1989, Read for Life has donated a quarter million books to Tulare County children. The non-profit organization supports all Teen Age Parenting programs in Tulare County, Head Start Pre-Schools, and provides books and information to the pre-school migrant programs and home-based pre-schools. Read for Life reaches out to children in crisis by placing books in shelters, homework and health centers throughout Tulare County.

Scholarship applications will be accepted through Friday, March 31, 2017. The award is open to all graduating high school seniors in Tulare County who have performed a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service outside of school which focuses on improving literacy in Tulare County. The applicant must have a minimum 2.5 GPA and plan to attend a college, university, or vocational/trade school in the United States.

Projects will be judged on creativity and originality in addition to overall impact on improving literacy in Tulare County. The \$500 award will be paid directly to the school to be attended by the award recipient and must be used by Dec. 31 of the year after it is awarded.

The application and instructions are available online at www.readforlife.org.



September 6-15, 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

Rome, Florence, Siena, Venice, Assisi, Perugia, Milan, Tuscan Countryside, Florence, Murano Island, Venice, Milan, Duomo

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- Staying on top of multiple sales tax rates.
- And your questions

Wednesday, February 22, 2017 • Brandman University, 649 S. County Center • 8:30-4:30pm • FREE
RSVP at <http://visaliachamber-dev.chambermaster.com/events/calendar/2017-02-01> or call 559-734-5876

VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Visalia Unified Welcomes a New Charter School

Recently, the Visalia Unified Board of Trustees approved Global Learning Charter School, a new dependent charter school that will open in August 2017. This is an exciting development that I'm sure our community will want to know more about.

Global Learning Charter School is a brand-new charter school that becomes the 42nd member of the Visalia Unified family of schools. GLC will start with kindergarten through grade six, but will grow into a K-8 school as students matriculate through the program. It will be located on the campus currently occupied by Fairview Elementary.

Global Learning Charter is a dependent charter school. This means that the school is overseen by the Visalia Unified School Board and operates as a VUSD school in every sense: GLC will operate under VUSD policies, with VUSD teachers, and offer a program approved by VUSD. GLC will be the fifth dependent charter school in our district.

Each of our charter schools has a unique approach to serving the needs of students, and because the boundaries for charter schools are less rigid, they offer the opportunity to serve a broader geographical range of students than a traditional school and are more accessible by the community at large. Our other dependent charter schools are Visalia Charter Independent Study, Visalia Technical Early College High School, Charter Alternatives Academy, and Charter Home School Academy.

Why would a traditional school district open a new charter school? The simplest and best answer is innovation. The heart of any school is its academic program, and Global Learning Charter has three areas of focus that represent different approaches for students and parents. First, the school will focus on developing



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

skills that research and local industry tell us are critical for success in the 21st century: collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication. Second, the school will have a global education as a strong unifying theme for its program. This theme will develop a global perspective and skill set that allows students to engage more fully in a globally-connected world. Finally, the school will incorporate world languages starting with Kindergarten and continuing throughout the instructional program.

Some might ask, if these things are so good for kids, why not do them at all of our schools? An important

part of our charter school development concept is that the best ideas developed at these schools are carried into our traditional schools so that all students may take advantage of them. As a gardener might establish a hotbed to promote the growth of new plants, we seek to use charter schools to be a hotbed for the development of new ideas that support learning. A few examples from our current charter schools illustrate how this can work. Students may access online courses at all of our high schools because Visalia Charter Independent Study has pioneered that program and can support it at the traditional high schools. Visalia Technical Early College High School has a very strong concurrent enrollment program with College of the Sequoias, and we are working to bring options of this type to all high schools. By creating an elementary charter school, we will establish a hotbed at the elementary level where new ideas can be explored and then transplanted to our broader family of schools.

Global Learning Charter School is an exciting new development for Visalia Unified. Enrollment at the school will be open through the middle of February. I look forward to updating the community on the progress of this school as it grows.

COS Announces Spring 2017 CHAP Lineup



College of the Sequoias' Cultural Historical Awareness Program (CHAP) is pleased to invite the community to the Spring 2017 season of speakers. The CHAP program's theme for 2016-2017 is: "Economic Inequality: Problems and Representations." All CHAP events are free and open to the public. Campus parking is free during the events.

Continuing in the lineup of nationally-renowned speakers, this February 9, 6:30 p.m. in the Visalia campus Ponderosa lecture hall, filmmaker Ligiah Villalobos will screen her film, "Under the Same Moon" or "La Misma Luna." The screening will be followed by a Q&A session about the film and life in the industry.

"La Misma Luna," tells the parallel stories of nine-year-old Carlitos and his mother, Rosario. In the hopes of providing a better life for her son, Rosario works illegally in the U.S. while Carlitos lives with his grandmother in Mexico. The film documents the challenges of being apart and the hope that they will one day be reunited.

On March 23, 6:30 p.m., also in the Ponderosa lecture hall, COS will entertain Tim Z. Hernandez, novelist and poet. Hernandez will be celebrating the hometown release of his book, "All They Will Call You."

"All They Will Call You," is the harrowing account of the California plane crash in 1948 that claimed the lives of 32 passengers, 28 of which were Mexican citizens; farmworkers being deported by the U.S. government. The narrative captures testimony, historical records and eyewitness accounts to paint an intimate portrait of those who perished.

The April 2017 speaker will be announced at a later date.

More information on these and other, upcoming CHAP events is available at cos.edu/CHAP or by calling 559.730.3921.

FCN helps to make spirits bright at Christmas



Changing what our community thinks about the collection industry one child at a time by sharing the magic

of Christmas! The stockings were hung on the chimney with care, in hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there. Their feet had been measured for new socks and new shoes and on Saturday, December 10th they took them home with a smile on their faces. From face painting, sports balls, books and sing-a-longs to games, pizza, socks and shoes. Each child is given a special Santa surprise when they visit with him and look into his eyes. Volunteers cheering, high fiving and calling out woot, woot as the children receive their bag full of Christmas loot.

Ann's Kids for Christmas Program has a rich history of touching the lives of literally thousands of children over its 33 year history. The program works with staff members and teachers from various local schools to help select children between the ages of 3 and 10. Without this event, many of these children may not have the chance to experience the magic of Christ-mas.

Smiles and the laughter filled the room as the children looked around to see all the wonders of the amazing day. "I saw my big gift and said to myself, that big one is for me! This is the greatest day ever!" said one young boy.

There are many to thank for this SPECTACULAR day:

- Payless Shoes - for always giving us the best deals and the best of yourselves!
- Visalia Sunset Rotary - thinking about KFC all year - putting your money where your mouth is.
- Visalia Rawhide - the Tipper shirts were the best! And so was Tipper!
- Champion Ball Company - all the kids love sports balls.
- Read for Life - fabulous gift - a book of their own.
- Visalia Breakfast Rotary - making a difference in our community.
- A & W - who doesn't love the A & W bear?!
- Cal Fire - Coloring books and crayons and bringing Smokey the Bear.

And many, many monetary gifts! And then, just as quickly as it started, the event was over. Each child walked back to the buses sporting a new pair of shoes and carrying a huge bag of gifts. Each volunteer left with a full heart. That's a wrap!

For more information on how you or your company can get involved with Ann's Kids for Christmas 2017 please contact Venita Jourdan at 800-540-9011 or vjour@fcnetwork.com or visit their web site at www.fcnetwork.com to see a video montage of the history of the event.

TRAVEL

China: Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou & Hangzhou

The Visalia Chamber is offering the opportunity to explore China without the hassle of making airline reservations, booking hotels, figuring out transportation or worrying about what to eat. The trip is 9 days and includes shuttle service to LAX, 3 meals a day, 4 and 5 star hotel accommodations, roundtrip airfare from LAX to Beijing, Chinese domestic airfare, deluxe bus tours and an English speaking tour guide. The trip will depart on October 6, 2017 and return on October 14, 2017. The cost of the tour is \$2,099 per person (double occupancy) for Chamber Members and \$2,199 per person (double occupancy) for non-Chamber members.

Travelers will catch a shuttle from Visalia to LAX Airport where they will board an international flight to Beijing, China. While in Beijing travelers will visit Tian An Men Square, the largest square in the world as well as the Temple of Heaven which was built in 1420 AD. Additional sightseeing locations include the Palace Museum also known as the Forbidden City which has a total of 9,999 rooms. Before leaving Beijing travelers will journey to the Great Wall. The wall is said to be the only man-made structure



visible by the naked eye from the moon.

From Beijing travelers will board a flight and travel to Suzhou to visit the Lingering Garden, Tiger Hill and Hanshan Temple. Additionally there will be a tour of the National Embroidery Institute to learn about silk embroidery, a local craft with thousands of years of history. At the end of the day everyone will enjoy dinner and a show featuring traditional Chinese music. From Suzhou there will be a short excursion to Hangzhou where travelers will visit the Economic Development Zone and the Lingyin Temple featuring a 64.3 foot high camphor-wood carving of Buddha. Following the tour there will be a morning boat cruise on West Lake and an afternoon bus trip to Shanghai. Once in Shanghai there will be a visit to Yu Garden, a maze of marvelous pavilions, ponds, rocky works and overreaching trees.

For more information on the China trip, contact Dante Rosh at 559-734-5876, or visit the website at www.visaliachamber.org/travel.

Children's Spring Art Classes



Arts Visalia will be offering Spring art classes to children ages 5-18 on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays beginning in February. Classes are offered in a variety of mediums including painting, ceramics, drawing and print making. For more information please visit artsvisalia.org or call 559-739-0905. Adult Classes will also be available and can be found on the Arts Visalia website.

February 4th is Family Art Day. Drop by between noon and 2:00 pm to create your own valentines!!

The Visalia Art League & Arts Visalia will be hosting a bus trip to the Getty Center, Los Angeles on Saturday, February 11th. Visit the Getty Center, renowned for its collection of European paintings, drawing, manuscripts, sculpture, decorative arts as well as its important photography collection. The bus will depart from the Visalia Convention Center at 6:30 am and will return to Visalia around 9:00 pm. Parking is available in the city parking garage directly across the street from the convention center. The trip will include stops on the way and on the return for breakfast and dinner on your own.

Cost \$65.00 per person (includes bus fare and museum entry).

Reservations: Call ARTS VISLIA 559-739-0905

Payment can be made by cash, check or credit card and can be made at Arts Visalia.

Tickets are non-refundable and seating is limited.



The Visalia Chamber of Commerce Opens the Nomination Process for the 2017 Annual Awards Celebration

The Visalia Chamber is seeking nominations for the 64th Annual Awards Celebration

Categories:

- Large, Medium, Small Business of Year
- Non-Profit of the Year
- Woman of the Year
- Man of the Year
- Young Professional of the Year (under 40)

To nominate an individual or a business go to: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/annual-awards/>

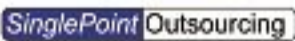
The deadline for nominations is March 1, 2017

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CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Visalia City Council Meeting	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Visalia City Council Meeting	21	22 Learn Quickbooks in a Day	23 Ambassador Breakfast	24	25
26	27	28 Business After Hours, Park Visalia				

HEALTHCARE NOTE

Kaweah Delta's Ascendant Trajectory

Written By Lindsay Mann

Kaweah Delta is on ascendant trajectory of continual improvement in clinical quality, and patient safety. This is evidenced by numerous independent and objective measures including some of the following:

1. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid services has, for the second time, designated Kaweah Delta as a four-star hospital on a five-star scale. We are the only hospital in the Central Valley, including all hospitals in Bakersfield and Fresno, with a four-star rating. This rating, issued by the federal government, is based on 64 objective measures that rank hospitals in their performance relative to clinical quality and patient outcomes, patient safety, and patient's rating of their experience while in the hospital.

2. For the fourth time Kaweah Delta has been designated as an "A" rated hospital in patient safety by the Leapfrog organization. This distinction has been earned based on 30 different patient safety measures including, for example, preventing medication errors, falls, bedsores, and developing robust information systems that ensure that all aspects of a patient's care are known to all providers to ensure excellent communication leading to appropriate and care and ideal clinical outcomes.

3. Recently our cardiac surgery program was ranked by US News and World Report as being among the top 14% best programs in the nation. I am pleased to report that, as of this writing, we have moved up to be among the top 11% of cardiac surgery programs in



Lindsay Mann
CEO
Kaweah Delta Health Care District.

the nation. In addition, we are now working with the Cleveland Clinic to further evaluate our opportunities in cardiac surgery and cardiology including the likely development of new and less invasive methods of addressing heart disease.

4. Kaweah Delta is now pursuing certification as a Stroke Center with the Joint Commission. This certification will be earned as we follow nationally recognized protocols that ensure that stroke patients are diagnosed promptly and that the interventions needed to address this stroke, at the time it is occurring, are immediately provided in the interest of preserving the brain's functionality and preserving the associated mental and physical capacities of the patient. We have already seen remarkable outcomes from our pursuit of this certification.

Many more very specific examples could be given to confirm that Kaweah Delta's "ascendant trajectory" is far more than a phrase or a hoped-for state. Matters of clinical quality and patient safety are of the first order of importance at Kaweah Delta - and will remain so. From a patient and family perspective, providing individual patients with outstanding health outcomes and doing so in the context of an organization that understands the importance of safety is the very basis of their confidence in Kaweah Delta.

Kaweah Delta and this community have a bright future of healthcare ahead. Our physicians, our nurses, and other clinical staff are at the front lines of providing this community with the very best that healthcare can provide - and we are improving every day!

Visalia Chamber of Commerce Seeks Proposals for first ever Visalia SOUP

How do you "feed" a good idea? Visalia SOUP is looking to fund the best ideas out there.



The Visalia Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Visalia Convention Center, Fresno Pacific University - Visalia Campus and Visalia First Assembly is now accepting proposals for the inaugural Visalia SOUP on March 14, 2017. Visalia SOUP presented by Tucoemas Federal Credit Union supports Visalia's best ideas to make our community stronger. Visalia SOUP raises money, builds community support and connects local resources to help entrepreneurs carry out their ventures.

Visalia SOUP supports the entrepreneurial spirit by creating a venue for the community to gather, listen to great ideas that support the community and to help fund projects that will make a lasting impact. Presentation Proposals can be about a new or expanding business, a community project, an event or other ideas. Proposals must be submitted by February 21, 2017. All proposals can be submitted at: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/visalia-soup-proposal>.

The SOUP is a community-based crowdfunding dinner. The idea, modeled after the program in Detroit, Michigan, is a way to promote community-based development through crowdfunding, creativity, collaboration, democracy, trust and fun. To attend, a recommended donation of \$5 gets you entry into the event, soup, bread and a vote. Attendees will hear from four presenters, who have four minutes to describe their idea to the group (without the use of technology), and will answer four questions from the audience. At the event, attendees eat, talk, share resources, and vote on the project they think benefits the city the most. At the end of the night, the ballots are counted and the winner goes home with all of the money raised to carry out their project. Winners come back to a future SOUP dinner to report their project's progress. The first Visalia SOUP will be held on March 14, 2017 at 210 W. Center.

For more event details and proposal requirements go to: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/soup/> or call the Visalia Chamber of Commerce at 559-734-5876.

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Suncrest Bank Announces \$15 per Hour Minimum Wage

Visalia, CA – Suncrest Bank (OTCOX: SBKK) today announced that, with immediate effect, it will introduce a minimum wage of \$15 per hour for all non-commission based employees.

Mr. Ciaran McMullan, President and CEO of Suncrest Bank said, "This move not only reflects increases in the general cost of living in each of our markets but it also recognizes the incredibly important work that our less well paid employees do for us, day-in and day-out". He went on to say, "We want Suncrest to be known as the place to work, no matter what stage of your career you are at".

Suncrest Bank recently announced that it has completed its acquisition of Security First Bank in Fresno, CA, creating a combined organization of approximately \$460 million in total assets.

