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# Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- OCTOBER 4:**  
**TRAVEL PRESENTATION**  
East African Safari Adventure  
Time: 12:00 pm  
Location: Buckman-Mitchell Office
- OCTOBER 12:**  
**Leadership Visalia Alumni Mixer**  
Time: 6:00 - 8:00 pm  
Location: BarrelHouse Brewing Co.
- OCTOBER 20:**  
**Visalia SOUP**  
Time: 5:00 - 8:00 pm  
Location: Tulare County Office of Education
- OCTOBER 24:**  
**Business After Hours Mixer**  
Time: 5:30 - 7:30 pm  
Location: Boretti Inc.
- OCTOBER 25:**  
**Stop Harassment Workshop**  
Time: 7:30 - 10:00 am  
Location: Lamp Liter Inn
- OCTOBER 26:**  
**Ambassador Breakfast**  
8:00 - 9:00 am  
Visalia First Assembly Church



- The Legendary Blue Danube River Cruise**  
May 7-17, 2018
- African Safari Adventure**  
May 17-29, 2018  
\*Slideshow presentation  
October 4, 2017  
Buckman-Mitchell Office 12:00 pm
- America's Heritage**  
June 7-16, 2018  
\*Slideshow presentation  
November 8, 2017  
City Administration Building 12:00 pm
- South Pacific Wonders**  
August 21 - September 4, 2018  
\*Slideshow presentation  
December 6, 2017  
City Administration Building 12:00 pm
- China**  
October 8-16, 2018  
\*Slide Show Presentation  
February 13, 2018  
Wyndham 6:00 pm
- Islands of New England**  
October 19-26, 2018
- New York City Holiday**  
December 10-14, 2018  
\*Slide Show Presentation  
December 6, 2017  
City Administration Building 12:00 pm

Collette Vacations,  
Mayflower Tours, Cistline  
For more information, go to  
[www.visaliachamber.org/travel](http://www.visaliachamber.org/travel)

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

## VF Outdoor: Distributing Major Lifestyle Brands Around the Country

By: Nicole Wissler

Driving through the Visalia Industrial Park you will notice quite a few large distribution centers. One of those buildings is home to the VF Outdoor distribution center. While you may have heard of VF Outdoor, do you know what they actually distribute? I recently had the chance to learn about VF Outdoor and their strong connection to Visalia.

### Tell us a little about VF Outdoor?

VF Corporation outfits consumers around the world with its diverse portfolio of iconic lifestyle brands, including Vans®, The North



Face®, Timberland®, Wrangler® and Lee®. Founded in 1899, VF has grown to become one of the world's largest apparel, footwear and accessories companies with \$12 billion in annual revenue, and socially and environmentally responsible operations spanning numerous geographies, product categories and distribution channels. VF is committed to delivering innovative products to consumers and creating long-term value for its customers and shareholders.

### Who are VF Outdoor customers?

VF's Distribution Center in Visalia serves any retailers in the United States that sell The North Face®, JanSport®, lucy®, Reef® or Eagle Creek® brand products.

### What is something interesting about VF Outdoor that Visalia residents may not be aware of?

Visalia residents may be surprised by the scale of VF Corporation's business overall. VF is the world's largest producer of backpacks and the world's largest maker of denim jeans. VF also purchases more zip-

pers than any other company in the world, and uses roughly 1 percent of the world's annual cotton yield.

Our Visalia Distribution Center supports five of VF's major brands nationwide, supplying products to retail, outlet and e-commerce consumers.

### How does VF Outdoor get involved in the local community?

Around the world, our company encourages and empowers associates to get involved in service projects and give back to their local communities. Specifically, the VF Foundation has donated over \$20 million to community causes.

Locally, our VF Visalia team has focused its efforts on fundraising for the Ronald McDonald House. We have sponsored two rooms each year, as well as the remodel of two kitchens. In addition to fundraising for the Ronald McDonald House, VF also has supported a variety of projects with local schools, notably the donation of school supplies to a local elementary school. We also support band, art and drama

programs in our area high schools, and we sponsor local youth sporting teams.

### Do you have any statistics regarding the economic impact VF Outdoor has annually on Visalia?

Our greatest impact has been our ability to provide quality jobs to those living in Visalia. VF's Visalia Distribution Center employs up to 1,100 people, and most of them live within a 10-15-mile radius from the facility.

### What are some of VF's current and upcoming projects?

Our Distribution Center just completed a \$3 million improvement project, and we are in the process of developing more projects for 2018 to improve the service we provide to our customers.

The Chamber would like to thank VF Outdoor for giving us the opportunity to learn more about their business and how they are impacting our local community. We are very happy that they chose to call Visalia home and wish them continued success and growth.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### Avoid the Heartbreaking Side Business

Often I use this column to share exciting news, big community wins or ways the Visalia Chamber is helping businesses grow. Helping businesses grow, overcome challenges and be successful is at the core of our Chamber's mission. The Board of Directors, ambassadors, staff, and I spend a great deal of time thinking, planning and working towards making things better for businesses. When there is a challenge, we work to find solutions. Recently we noticed a challenge that needed addressing. According to the Small Business Administration, only half of all businesses make it to their 5-year anniversary. While this challenge is not unique to Visalia, we cannot ignore it.

When businesses fail, it hurts our community. Entrepreneurs are left with debt; people lose jobs; our community has vacant commercial real estate; businesses failing hurts everyone. For us at the Chamber, this is a particularly heartbreaking scenario to watch play out. We can see the little mistakes that become fatal blows. We see how failure could have been avoided.

The reality is that business isn't as easy as it looks. I have a great friend who is an amazing mechanic. He decided some years ago it was time his talent directly supported his family rather than "lining the pockets" of someone else. He loved working on cars and had a loyal base of customers wanting him to work on their cars. It seemed like a great plan, but he quickly learned that the work of keeping a business open meant he didn't have time to work on cars, not like he had before. Now his time was spent



Gail Zurek  
Visalia Chamber  
President & CEO

balancing check books, dealing with HR issues and reviewing legal paperwork. He wanted to get back to working on cars which is his passion. He has since made some changes in his business that allows him to actually work on cars, but he freely admits the first couple of years his business were rougher than they had to be.

My friend isn't alone. At the Chamber we see challenged and failing businesses more often than we'd care to admit. It is not that the business idea is not good or that the person was not an expert in their field. Rather, it is that running a business requires you to have more than passion. It's from this vantage point

that we decided to launch Emerge – a 12 session program designed to help entrepreneurs take an idea and turn it into a launchable business. Through this program, participants will be given tools to make sound business decisions, get access to industry experts and write a solid, functioning business plan. The first cohort of Emerge participants will begin in January 2018 but applications are due November 17, 2017. More details about times, location and cost can be found on the Chamber website [VisaliaChamber.org/Emerge](http://VisaliaChamber.org/Emerge)

Emerge is our commitment to help develop strong lasting businesses. We firmly believe great communities need great businesses. This is our bold step to help create both. If you know of someone who is considering starting a business, or has recently opened a new business, please share this article with them. Business isn't easy and you don't have to do it alone!

## VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS





**Exceeding the Vision:  
The Pursuit of  
Excellence for your  
Organization**

SHRM of Tulare Kings Counties would like to invite you to attend their 13th Annual Conference on Thursday, November 9th from 7:30 - 4:30 pm at the Wyndham Visalia. The conference will include breakfast, lunch and vendor booths.

The keynote speaker is Samuel Mattioli, a Dale Carnegie Master-Trainer. Samuel is certified in Winning with Relationship Selling, Dale Carnegie Skills for Success, Corporate Solutions, Leadership Training for Managers & High Impact Presentation. In addition to Samuel Mattioli, conference speakers include: James Boretti, President of Boretti Inc., Steve McCartha, CEO, True Legacy Consulting, and Scott Ferrin, SHRM-SCP Field Services Director West. Booth space and sponsorships are available. For more information go to [www.shrmtularekings.org](http://www.shrmtularekings.org)

**Soroptimist: Live Your  
Dream Scholarship**

Since 1972, the Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards program (formerly the Women's Opportunity Awards) has disbursed more than \$30 million to tens of thousands of women who have overcome poverty, domestic and sexual violence, divorce, the death of a spouse, or other life challenges. They are women just like you who had the courage and determination to turn their lives around.

Recipients may use the cash award to offset any costs associated with their efforts to attain higher education, including books, childcare and transportation. The program begins on the club level, where award amounts vary. Club recipients become eligible to receive region-level awards, which are granted through Soroptimist's 28 geographic regions. Currently, each Soroptimist region grants one first-place award for \$5,000.

The Application deadline is November 15th and are now being accepted. Award recipients will be notified between January and June. Not all applicants will be selected for awards. Applications can only be submitted to SIA Headquarters or one club. Your application will be reviewed by a panel of judges, but all information will remain confidential and will not be shared without your prior permission.

- Step 1: Determine if you are eligible.
- Step 2: Tell Soroptimist about yourself.
- Step 3: Ask people to tell Soroptimist about you.
- Step 4: Submit your application.

For questions or more information check out the Live Your Dream Award FAQ at <http://www.soroptimist.org/awards/dreamawardsfaqforapplicants.pdf>. If you still have questions contact Soroptimist headquarters at [siahq@soroptimist.org](mailto:siahq@soroptimist.org)

**Edison International  
Scholarships Awarded to  
Local STEM Student-Interns**

1900. That's how many hours Career Technical Education (CTE) students from College of the Sequoias spent as interns with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) businesses across Tulare and Kings Counties.

Students participated in the Edison International Internship Scholarship program, which supports students in STEM-related majors who complete internship experience in their intended career field, under the supervision of a professional in the field. Nineteen students from the Engineering, Computer Information Systems, and Industrial Maintenance programs across all three COS campuses participated.

Edison International/4

**About this publication ...**

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**GROUND BREAKING • GRAND OPENING • RIBBON CUTTING • CEREMONIES**



Ribbon Cutting

**True Color Hair Studio**

106 S. Church St. • Visalia • (559) 679-5106



Ribbon Cutting

**Hire Up Staffing**

1736 S. Central St. Suite B • Visalia • (559) 334-3454



Ribbon Cutting

**Threads of Love Boutique**

4231 W. Noble Ave • 559-799-4237



Ground Breaking

**Quail Park at Shannon Ranch**

Corner of North Demaree and West Shannon Pkwy



Ribbon Cutting

**Sportsman's Warehouse**

1650 W Visalia Parkway • Visalia • (559) 308-7100

**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.

- **SPORTSMAN'S WAREHOUSE**  
(559) 308-7100  
Department Stores, Sporting Goods
- **TRUE COLOR HAIR STUDIO**  
(559) 679-5106  
Barbers, Beauty Salons & Spas
- **JACK IN THE BOX / VTP ENTERPRISES**  
(559) 325-4887  
Fast Food & Carry Out
- **CHAVEZ WEB DESIGN**  
(559) 623-2007  
Consultants
- **CLICK AWAY**  
(661) 859-8370  
Computers & Telecommunication
- **TF TIRE & SERVICE**  
(559) 651-2020  
Automotive Service, Repair & Parts
- **ARMSTRONG COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT**  
(559) 733-1322  
Property Management & Investments
- **ALTSYS SOLAR INC.**  
(559) 688-2544  
Solar Energy Products

**Renewing**

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

- 1st Alliance Energy
- AT&T
- Bay Alarm Company
- Bethlehem Center
- Building Industry Association of Tulare & Kings Counties\*
- Calvary Chapel Visalia\*
- CSET-Community Services Employment Training
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center
- Farm Credit West
- Fresno Pacific University Visalia Center\*
- Fresno State Visalia Campus
- Goodies Cookies & Specialty Cakes
- IDEA! Printing & Graphics
- ImagineU Interactive Children's Museum
- Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Four Creeks Lodge #94\*
- KRC Safety Co., Inc.\*
- Lane Engineers, Inc.
- Law Offices of James P. Hurlbutt
- Legacy Investments
- Lowe's
- Lucky Day Laundry
- Martinizing Dry Cleaner\*
- Miller Memorial Chapel\*
- Mission Linen Supply
- Monarch Home Services
- Optimal Hospice Foundation
- Orange Belt Stages
- Pacific Employers
- Paladin Investment Group
- Paloma Development Co.
- Patrick L. Salazar State Farm Insurance Agency
- Pena's Disposal
- Phil Cox
- QK aka: Quad Knopf Inc.
- Roseland Studios\*
- Sam Logan | Merrill Lynch
- Santa Fe Aggregates \*
- Sequoia Cigar Company
- Sutton Hague Law Corporation
- Tulare County Deputy Sheriff's Association\*
- V Town Derby Dames\*
- Visalia Eye Center\*
- Visalia Lions Band Review
- Visalia Public Cemetery District
- Visalia Sunset Rotary
- Visalia Unified School District Administration Department

\*Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber 110% Club.

IDEAS | DINNER | DISCUSS | VOTE  
\$5.00 ENTRY FEE

COMMUNITY-BASED CROWDFUNDING DINNER

VISALIA'S BEST IDEAS ARE PITCHED IN A 4 MINUTE PRESENTATION. ATTENDEES WILL BREAK BREAD AND EAT SOUP. OVER THE MEAL, ATTENDEES DISCUSS THE PRESENTATIONS AND WILL VOTE FOR THEIR FAVORITE PRESENTER.

WHEN: OCTOBER 20, 2017

TIME: 5:00PM DOORS OPEN  
5:30PM PRESENTATIONS START  
7:30PM WINNER ANNOUNCED

WHERE: TULARE COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION (TCOE)  
REDWOOD CONFERENCE CENTER | 6200 S. MOONEY BLVD.

WWW.VISALIACHAMBER.ORG/SOUP

CHRISTMAS TREE AUCTION

**Masquerade BALL**

DECEMBER 8, 2017

CHRISTMAS TREE AUCTION

WWW.VISALIACHAMBER.ORG/CHRISTMASTREE

THIS IS A FORMAL AFFAIR FOR 21 AND OVER  
HOSTED BY THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AT THE VISALIA CONVENTION CENTER



Thanks to orders from Hurley Elementary School and Central Valley Christian School in Visalia, and Sundale Elementary School in Tulare, Your City Sports (YCS) donated 930 pairs of high quality socks to guests at [Visalia Rescue Mission](#). YCS uses a Buy One-Give One model where for each item purchased, the company donates a pair of socks to a homeless charity in that community

Happy Trails would like to congratulate Michaela Bearfield for being a recipient of a Quilt of Honor. The hand crafted quilt was presented at Veterans Appreciation Day at the [Tulare County Fair](#). Michaela served in the U.S. Army from 2008-2014 as a Geospatial Imagery Analyst. Happy Trails met Michaela first as a volunteer in our program and



now she participates in our Equine Services for Heroes program. Thank you for your service Michaela!

[McDonald's Central Valley Owner Operators](#) hosted

a McFlurry Campaign "FUN"draiser benefiting [Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Central Valley](#) May 1 - August 31. In concluding the event, we were able to raise a total of \$82,128 for the children and families of Ronald McDonald House!!



**BOARD SPOTLIGHT**

**Crystal Jordan**

Crystal Jordan is the President of Armstrong Community Management. She has been a Chamber Board Member for 3 months.



Jordan

■ **Why is it important to be a Chamber member?** Chamber membership opens up an opportunity for businesses to be connected, get involved, get staff involved and really create

a strong network. It's flexible and allows you to make of it what you choose. You can use the Chamber just to connect with other members or you can really make it a relationship. The Chamber can provide businesses so many resources and be a go to for many needs.

■ **What do you like to do when you are not working?** I enjoy spending as much time as I can with my husband and two girls. We love to travel, sneaking away to the beach when we can. My hobbies also include reading and practicing yoga.

■ **What is your favorite place to go in Visalia when you are not working?** I love to visit the library. I've been going since I was a little girl. I still borrow books. In such a digital age, I find it peaceful. These days, I try to be a little speedier about my visit, but I can easily spend a few hours perusing the aisles.

■ **What was your favorite book that you read in the last 12 months and why?** The Woman in Cabin 10 by Ruth Ware is a great suspense. It grabbed my attention immediately and kept me on my toes the entire time. The book moves at a fast pace and was an overall good mystery.

■ **What is your best advice for young professionals?** Find a supportive mentor and make it a lifelong relationship. Also, never pass up an opportunity to take a class or a seminar. Get educated, join groups and volunteer.

**AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT**

**Stephanie M. Singletary-Quiz**

Stephanie M. Singletary-Quiz is an Outside Account Consultant for AAA Quality Services-

Potter's Division. "AAA quality services is available to take your call 24 hrs a day 7 days a week. We are your one stop shop for all your temporary site and special event needs like; portable sanitation, temporary fencing, temporary power, crowd control barricades, storage containers and septic service and chemicals. We also specialize in residential and commercial alarm monitoring and installation, standing guards and security patrol, fire safety and more! Please like our Facebook page while feasting your eyes on our gem of a restroom trailer, featuring granite countertops!

Covering your needs with style will ensure your event budget, time and energy are not wasted from the aftermath of poor facilities. Get back to the basics and let your event be their memory!"

■ **What are some of the ways you'd recommend getting involved/working with/partnering with the Chamber?**

The Chamber offers a networking family that is priceless. Simply attending every event and ribbon cutting is the start to ensuring continuous growth for your company. Coming prepared to Business After Hours and Ribbon cuttings is key to maximizing your Chamber experience. Flyers, cards and interacting with local business members creates the stage for building relationships that last a lifetime.

■ **What has Chamber Membership meant for your company?**

Visalia Chamber Of Commerce has created a resource for AAA Quality Services that cannot be compared to any other. The chamber refers our company to potential clients creating instant credibility. We are proud to be involved in many community events.

We pride ourselves in quality service and 60 years of putting our customers first! Visalia Chamber ensures their members are a priority in our community! The Visalia Chamber of Commerce focuses on instilling leadership qualities, creating a networking family that cares and a plethora of opportunities to grow your business!

■ **The best part of Visalia is ....?**

The ever present sense of unity, compassion and growth!

■ **What is your favorite local charity/non-profit?**

This is a hard one! There are a multitude of amazing non-profits here in Visalia that change lives...

ACT for Women and Girls is a non-profit organization committed to eradicating the oppression that lies deep in the roots of Tulare County and its surrounding Central Valley region. ACT has created a movement of social justice leaders who raise their voices to impact our community, state and nation.

**VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Know the Signs**



School age children suicide is a reality. Visalia is not exempt from this sad truth. Having someone we know complete suicide shocks and saddens us, and the impact is even

greater somehow when younger kids do so. Suicide can be prevented. And Visalia Unified is engaging in a campaign to help our schools and our community understand how we can promote life-supporting factors and resources that protect against suicide. Our timing is appropriate, for we know that the suicide rates for adolescent boys and girls have been rising steadily since 2007, according to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Our campaign focuses on three things that each of us can know and do to prevent suicide. First, we can know the warning signs of kids who are considering suicide. Second, we can know what to say to someone we believe may be considering suicide. And third, we can know of resources to connect with someone we are concerned about. This knowledge, spread throughout our organization and supported by our collective will to prevent suicide will go a very long way toward making Visalia a safer, better and stronger community for our kids to grow up in.

Our Know the Signs campaign started in September, to coincide with National Suicide Prevention Month. Parents received a letter advising of the warning signs of suicide and what to do when those signs are observed. We began a training program for all staff members on suicide prevention that focused on information and simple steps that will help us be proactive. Other activities will carry this message through the school year. One of our District Goals is to maintain a caring and encouraging learning environment, and our work on that goal is an important part of our overall suicide prevention effort.



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

In short, the signs of suicide can be summarized as follows:

- Feelings that seem different from the past, including hopelessness, helplessness, fear of losing control, worthlessness, anxiety, or being worried or angry often.
- Actions that are different from the way a child acted in the past, especially things like talking about death or suicide, taking dangerous risks, withdrawing from activities or sports or using alcohol or drugs.
- Changes in personality, behavior, sleeping patterns, eating habits, loss of interest in friends or activities or sudden improvement after a period of being down or withdrawn.
- Threats that convey a sense of hopelessness, worthlessness, or preoccupation with death, such as, "Life doesn't seem worth it sometimes," or "I wish I were dead." This includes also plans for giving away favorite things, studying ways to die, obtaining a weapon or drugs, or suicide attempts like overdosing or cutting.
- Situations that can serve as "trigger points" for suicidal behaviors, including loss of loved ones, humiliations, rejections, failures, or getting in trouble at home, school or with the law.

[www.suicideispreventable.org](http://www.suicideispreventable.org) is an excellent resource for parents to obtain information on suicide, to learn strategies to start the conversation about suicide and what to do when signs of suicide are encountered. Should you encounter someone in suicidal crisis, the national 24-hour hotline is 1-800-273-8255.

We are committed to the well-being of our kids, and this motivates us to work hard to prevent school age children suicide. This is important work, and as a school district and a community we all can engage in this effort to help keep kids safe.

**VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Creating a College and Career Ready Experience**

By: **Kim Batty**  
Work Based Learning Coordinator  
Visalia Unified School District



The Visalia 2017-18 school year has begun with a flurry of events and activities within the Career and College Readiness Department. VUSD Career Technical Education gives high school students the opportunity to choose from ten Linked Learning Academies, with each academy having a unique industry theme. Implemented district wide, the academies house over 1,237 students. Students experience career themed courses, work-based learning, and various student support structures to create a true college and career ready experience. The academies' industry partners give students the opportunity to be mentored by those that feel passionately about their careers and have years of experience to share.

All 10th grade students in the Linked Learning academies will participate in the Leaders of Tomorrow Student Conference on October 9th, 2017 and job shadow days throughout the Spring 2018. The Leaders of Tomorrow student conference provides students with professional development workshops to prepare them for job shadows, internships and teaches them skills needed to enter the workforce.

The conference topics include; Dressing For Success by Jeff Atherton of Pipeline Church, What Winners Do Differently by Cathy Parker of Central Valley Business Forms & Jennifer Alvarado of Office Depot, Art of Communication by IMAGO, Teens and Social Media by Officer Logas and Officer Rob Zieg of the Visalia Police Department, Let's Party by Cyndy McDonald, Educational Consultant and Dining Etiquette by Armondo Apodaca, retired CEO Tulare Kings Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

VUSD also offers 15 career technical educational pathways in the high schools ranging from Automotive Repair, Ag Mechanics, Welding, Medical Assisting, Nursing Assistant, Animal Science, Ornamental Horticultural, Forestry, Media Arts, Woodworking, Food Service, Business Management, Child Development, Ag Construction and Agri-science.

If you would like to be involved in events held by the VUSD Career and College Readiness department please call (559) 730-7510. VUSD is always looking for industry professionals who would like to be of part the Visalia Partners in Education and help prepare students for college and career readiness. Visalia Partners in Education (VPIE) opportunities include: job shadowing, internships, professional mentoring, industry tours and guest speaking events.

**Visalia Chamber of Commerce**  
**Looking for VISALIA SOUP Proposals**



The Visalia Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Visalia Convention Center, Fresno Pacific University - Visalia Campus and Cross City Church is now accepting proposals for

the 2nd Visalia SOUP on October 20, 2017. Visalia SOUP 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. Proposals can be about a new or expanding business, a community project, an event or other ideas. Proposals must be

submitted by October 6, 2017. All proposals can be submitted at: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/soup>.

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 should win. 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 second Visalia SOUP will be held on October 20, 2017 at the Tulare County Office of Education Redwood Conference Center located at 6200 S. Mooney Blvd.

## Edison International

(continued from page 2)

Each student completed 100 hours of an internship, learning the ropes in a field that they hope to enter.

Arthur Velasquez, an Information Technology major reflected, "I found meeting with a team and working together with the style of direction our supervisors gave us, an excellent experience."

With teamwork, we accomplished much more than we originally planned with what we were going to learn. I have a interest in programming business software now after this internship and have different avenues of exploration for my future career." Velasquez completed his internship in the Computer Services department at COS.

Javier Salazar, an Industrial Maintenance Technology major, interned at California Dairies, Inc. "This experience helped me see the type of work I will be doing with my career," he said. "Every day I learned something new. It has been a great thing for me."

Emmanuel (JR) Lopez completed his Engineering Technology internship at Ruiz Foods. Lopez reflected, "I have valued my work experience with my degree working at Ruiz Foods. I believe that each student graduating from school should have an opportunity to an internship to create their motivation, to know strengths and weaknesses in a real life career." Lopez' supervisor at Ruiz Foods, Luis Martinez, was equally pleased. "I would like to continue this type of training," he said. "JR was a well-trained young man."

The Edison Scholarship Program is an annual collaborative project between the Tulare-Kings College and Career Collaborative, Tulare County Office of Education, College of the Sequoias, Porterville College and Edison International.



## ABLE Industries, Inc. Celebrates Achievements with a "Lucky" Awards Ceremony

**CASINO NIGHT!** Able Industries, Inc. will hold its annual Awards Dinner/Dance on Friday October 13, 2017 from 6:00 – 9:00 PM at the Elks Lodge in Visalia. This year's theme is Casino Night!

Able Industries, a non-profit organization, was established in 1960 and opened with only seven trainees. ABLE Industries now has two facilities in Visalia serving nearly 300 individuals with disabilities annually with a wide range of employment and training services.

The awards ceremony will recognize clients' achievements as well as community supporters, staff and business partners. The awards ceremony will be followed by "casino games" and a dance with live music from Visalia band Mary-Denise.

Tickets for this event are **PRE-SALE ONLY** and will NOT be sold at the door. Tickets must be purchased by **FRIDAY OCTOBER 6, 2017** in order to attend. Tickets are only \$10.00 per person. Tickets will include a Shredded Chicken/Pork dinner and are available at Able Industries by calling 651-8150.

Able Industries/5

## HEALTHCARE NOTE

# Visalia Medical Clinic Expands Wellness Center Staff



Visalia Medical Clinic's Wellness Center, a program designed just for Medicare patients to help ensure that they receive their free annual preventative care visits, has expanded with the addition of Andrea Van Beek, RN, MSN, AGPCNP-BC.

Van Beek, a native of Tulare County, has extensive experience as a nurse practitioner, as staff nurse at the Cardiac Catheterization lab at Tulare Regional Medical Center, and as an intensive care unit nurse at Kaweah Delta Medical Center. She is a registered nurse, holds a master's degree in nursing from Duke University and is working toward her doctorate, also from Duke University. She is certified as an adult gerontology nurse practitioner.

She joins Jamie Ruddy, a certified physician assistant, and nurse practitioner Juanita Castellano, RN, at The Wellness Center, offering no-cost wellness visits that include creation of a prevention plan designed to keep patients healthier and more independent.

"Each patient receives a personalized Health Risk Assessment

which will identify risk factors for future health problems," Castellano said. "We then develop a screening schedule to monitor the patient's health going forward, and offer education on health conditions and medications."

Ruddy noted that Visalia Medical Clinic launched The Wellness Center to ensure "that our Medicare patients can take full advantage of the preventative health services that Medicare provides at no cost."

Ruddy is a graduate of the Duke University School of Medicine Physician Assistant Program in North Carolina, with a master of health sciences degree and a physician assistant certificate of completion. She completed her undergraduate bachelor of science degree at Fresno State University.

Castellano, a native of Visalia, earned her associate of science degree at College of the Sequoias and both her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from Fresno State University.

To make an appointment, call The Wellness Center at 738-7536.



Ruddy



Castellano

## CITY UPDATE

# The Visalia Emergency Communication Center

It's not often that our City gets to celebrate the grand opening of a new facility, so it was a historic day on Wednesday, September 20th when the community came together to watch us officially open the new Visalia Emergency Communications Center.

For those who weren't able to join us at the ribbon cutting, the "VECC", as it's referred to, is an 18,872 square foot state of the art building located in east Visalia at 420 North Burke Street.

One of the City Council's goals has been a strong downtown. The completion of the VECC has brought with it renewed vigor to this section of Visalia and road improvements to Burke and School Streets have further developed the area.

The facility now houses Fire Department Administration, the Emergency Operations Center, and Information Services offices on the first floor, while the new 911 Dispatch Center, the Traffic Management Center, and Police Department support offices are



Warren Gubler  
Mayor, City of Visalia

housed on the second floor.

An essential services facility, the VECC enhances the operations provided by our City's Dispatchers, Police and Fire by addressing space needs and efficiencies not only for today, but for the Visalia of the future. In fact, the building was built with technology and service in mind for years to come. It houses approximately 32,000 feet of data cabling (over six miles!), a CCTV surveillance system and an access control system.

Our growing City will utilize the VECC to its fullest extent. From our 911 dispatchers taking calls for service, to the staff of the Fire Department to the new EOC, the VECC is a commitment to the citizens of Visalia and a symbol of our public safety team's dedication to serving them.

For more information visit [www.visalia.city](http://www.visalia.city) or email [communityfeedback@visalia.city](mailto:communityfeedback@visalia.city). To contact Mayor Gubler directly, email [warren.gubler@visalia.city](mailto:warren.gubler@visalia.city).



## THE LAW AT WORK

# Avoiding Problems with Employee References



ATTORNEYS AT LAW - LLP

A natural consequence of severing ties with an employee is having to later provide references to prospective employers. In order to avoid potential liability for defamation or slander, employers should follow certain guidelines in giving references.

First, an employer should give advance notice of the reference. When terminating the employment, the employer should inform the employee in advance of what facts with be given in future references. Avoid simply saying that the reference will be "good" or "favorable."

Second, be careful to avoid conclusions. Calling a former employee "insubordinate" or "incompetent" can create a potential lawsuit for defamation. Instead, state that the employee refused to follow directions, or did not meet specific standards. Remember that not all questions have to be answered, especially those that call for conclusions – such as "Would you rehire this person?"

Third, disclose only truthful information and make sure that personnel file information is factually correct. Supervisors should be trained to place only accurate, verifiable information in personnel files – a reference is only as truthful as the underlying information on which it is based.

Fourth, it's almost always smart to obtain a signed release from employees regarding specific information that may be disclosed to prospective employers. The release should provide the employee with as much information as possible about information to be disclosed, including dates of



Brett T. Abbott  
Gubler & Abbott LLP

employment, job titles held, a statement about the employee's work performance, and the reason for termination of employment.

Fifth, designate only a limited number of people within the organization to give references. It is wise to notify employees, preferably in the Employee Handbook, that references will be provided by only one or two designated people. This practice will minimize the risk of contradictory references on behalf of the company, and ensure that reference standards are kept.

Sixth, avoid responding to oral references requests. Require all employees asking for references to request the reference in writing, and to provide a signed statement from the employee authorizing the prospective employer to obtain a reference. Also, reply only in writing to reference requests and keep a copy of all documentation.

While most references given to prospective employers will not result in problems down the road, taking some minimal precautions, as outlined above, can save companies substantial amounts of time, money, and stress. Termination of employees is part of doing business, and so is giving references. Make sure you do it right.

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](mailto:bta@thecalifornialawyers.com)). For specific employment law advice or other legal assistance, contact Gubler & Abbott LLP, (559) 625-9600, 1110 N. Chinoweth St., Visalia, CA 93291 ([www.thecalifornialawyers.com](http://www.thecalifornialawyers.com)).



## Labor Law Compliance Series Stop Harassment Seminar Lamp Liter Inn

Wed., October 15, 2017  
7:30 - 10:00 am

Breakfast Included

Pre-Registration:

\$40 for Members • \$50 for Non-Members

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**

For Registration call 559-734-5876



## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS IN MEDICAL PRACTICE IN TULARE COUNTY



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Past President and Current Member of the Tulare County Medical Society

Dr. Lyle B. Stillwater is an ENT-otolaryngologist and is a founding partner of Sequoia Surgery Center in Visalia

**Lyle B. Stillwater, M.D.**

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LEADERSHIP VISALIA

# Visalia Chamber of Commerce Announces 2017-2018 Leadership Visalia Class

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce welcomed 17 participants to the Leadership Visalia class of 2018. For more than thirty years, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce has worked to develop community leaders who will fill roles in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. The intensive leadership development course is designed to help emerging leaders in businesses and other community organizations further develop their skills, experience, and community knowledge.

The 2017-2018 class will be facilitated by Dante Rosh, Leadership Development Coordinator, Visalia Chamber of Commerce.



Leadership Visalia students spent 2 days at a retreat at Wonder Valley Ranch & Resort

Class members include:

- Aldiva Rubalcava, Recovery Credit Repair, Inc.
- Amalia Elias, Jo-Ann Stores West Coast Distribution Center
- Andy Di Meo, Visalia Unified School District
- Bryce Martinho, Visalia Ceramic Tile
- Christen Hulse, CASA of Tulare County
- Dustin Hall, City of Visalia - Fire Department
- Esperanza Alcazar, Gubler & Abbott, LLP
- JC Palermo, Kaweah Delta Health Care District
- Marina Rojas, Tulare County Association of Realtors
- Matt Case, Central Valley Business Forms
- Morgan Jones, Kawneer
- Natalie Bolin, Tulare County HHS - Child Welfare
- Peter Deluyker, Morgan Stanley
- Samantha Ferrero, County of Tulare
- Shelley Ellis, Visalia Convention Center - City of Visalia
- Yvette Florendo, Seals Construction Inc.
- Zach Green, Zach Green Films

This 9 month program began on August 24th with an orientation meeting, and will include evening classes, and day sessions featuring guest speakers and on site experiences. The Visalia Chamber of Commerce continues host the Leadership Visalia program to confirm the commitment of the organization to advancing leadership in our community.

For more information regarding the Leadership Visalia program go to [www.visaliachamber.org/leadership](http://www.visaliachamber.org/leadership).



## Able Industries

(continued from page 4)

Able Industries is also seeking sponsors for this event. If your business is interested in a tax-deductible sponsorship please contact Able Industries.

Contact Information:

James Alves  
Phone: 651-8150  
Email: [james@ableindustries.org](mailto:james@ableindustries.org)  
Web Site: [www.ableindustries.org](http://www.ableindustries.org)

**WHAT: ABLE Industries Annual Awards Dinner/Dance**

**WHEN: FRIDAY OCTOBER 13, 2017 6:00 - 9:00 PM**

**WHERE: Elks Lodge  
3100 W. Main St.,  
Visalia, CA**

**COST: \$10.00 per person**



## Is it Time to Bring in Outside Help?

No one is questioning the ability of your current security manager. No one is questioning the effectiveness of your current security apparatus. But, all things being equal, have you stopped to ponder whether it's time to bring in some outside help?

In school, a teacher administers tests on recently covered material. In any business, a senior manager spot-checks his/her subordinate's work. In a Police academy, an instructor evaluates trainee's performance and provides go/no-go evaluations as well as constructive criticism. In the military, units are evaluated by unbiased and non-unit affiliated OC/T's (Observer, Controller/Trainers). In all industries, it is imperative that at some point an outside entity is brought in to evaluate your performance.

So why is 'in-house' evaluation not always preferable? Simple. People and personalities. It becomes too easy for co-workers who BBQ with each other on the weekends, know each other's families, joke around the water cooler, to become biased in their evaluations of performance. No one wants to be the one that critiques their best work friend's performance in something as vital and visible as security responses or performance during an emergency drill. To avoid work conflict or hard feelings, personnel responsible for security evaluations, emergency drills, or emergency action policies may allow certain mistakes to slide in favor of keeping the organization calm.

And if this isn't you or your organization, then kudos. This obviously doesn't apply to everyone. But if it does...maybe it's time to bring in some outside perspective; a set of unbiased eyes, someone not beholden to office politics and feelings.

Enter the security consultant. A security consultant is an unbiased party that has experience in some facet of the security industry. The security consultant's interest is the client, finding creative and cost-effective solutions to security issues. They may have a breadth of experience across many disciplines of the security industry, or a depth of experience in only a few. For these reasons, it's highly recommended that when 'shopping' for a security consultant, reach out to references, learn about the consultant's experience as well as that of his/her employees.

Is It Time/6

# The Eighth Wonder of the World

By Igor Ferreira  
True Legacy Financial, YPN Steering Committee Member



It was Albert Einstein who famously stated, "Compound interest is the eighth wonder

of the world. He who understands it, earns it... he who doesn't... pays it." However, it takes two critical elements for compound interest to really work its wonders: the reinvestment of earnings and time. Of these two elements, time is by far the most important. As young professionals, assuming a normal life expectancy, we expect to have time on our side. Unfortunately, rarely do I see families and individuals taking advantage of their youth by saving and investing a portion of their income.

I understand we have many challenges while building our ideal lives: marriage, children, unstable employment, starting a business, medical expenses, student loan debt, etc. We use these as excuses and tell ourselves that there is plenty of time to save later in life. But an interesting thing starts to happen as we age... current challenges go away and are replaced by other challenges! There will never be an ideal moment for somebody to save for their future. And if you are feeding yourselves the excuse of "I can't right now", just remember that you are consistently shrinking the most important element of the

compound interest equation, which is time.

What do we do about this? How can I start saving now if I don't have any money? Those are both great questions, and it all starts off by doing something many people dread... a BUDGET. Without a budget, you will have no clue how much disposable income you can put away. A simple budget can really expand your insight on your current financial situation. It really is as easy as organizing what comes in, and figuring out where it all goes. If you have more money going out then in, you have a big problem and something needs to change. You are more than likely living beyond your means and need to either increase your income and/or cut items from your spending to save money. If you have a surplus at the end of the month, make sure you are putting that towards your savings goals immediately to take advantage of this wonderful thing known as compound interest.

If you need any help getting started, please reach out to someone you know who is successful with budgeting and has a proven track record on being able to save and invest consistently.

As I always tell clients, "The best time to start saving was yesterday. Since we don't have a time machine, the second best time is today."

# Fake News? Alternative Facts?



AAUW Invites you to join us at Café 210 to hear noted journalist Jim Willwerth. Jim, a retired journalism teacher from Cal Poly, Pomona, and author of several books will lecture on "fake news" and "alternative facts" and explain how these terms can undermine the work of journalists. He was a Time Magazine journalist for 33 years. During this tenure he covered seven different wars overseas. Willwerth will discuss his own career and that of journalists who perished while reporting the news in Cambodia, Vietnam and Central America. Through the stories of those who gave their life for watchdog journalism, Willwerth will examine the importance of reporting and how it serves as a system of checks and balances for readers.

Thursday, October 12, 2017, 5:00 pm at Café 210, located at 210 W. Center St. Visalia.

AAUW empowers women and girls by promoting opportunity for literacy equality and education.



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APPLICATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 17, 2017



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# Is It Time

(continued from page 5)

Do your research on who you're bringing on. Additionally, it's important to know your own vulnerabilities or short comings. As Sun Tzu famously said, "Know yourself and know your enemy..." If you need to consult on aspects of your physical site, find someone qualified to speak to physical security. If you would like to include active threat training in staff development, find someone qualified to speak on the subject. Or, if you aren't sure what you need, it doesn't hurt to bring someone in and just ask their opinion.

Whether you're a high school administrator, manager of a manufacturing plant, or human resources manager, it's not an indictment of your current security posture. Conversely, it's a commendable proactive approach to providing the safest environment for your organization.

**About the Author:** Brian Hampel, M.S. is the co-founder and Vice President of Hampel Security Consulting, Inc.

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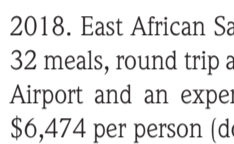
BEN-E-LECT Southern California Edison Lamp Liter Inn Central Valley Business Forms

**CLIP & SAVE**

**CALENDAR - OCTOBER 2017**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Visalia City Council Meeting	3	4 East African Safari Adventure Presentation Buckman Mitchell Office 12:00 pm	5	6	7
8	9	10 Chamber Government Affairs Committee Meeting Buckman Mitchell Office 7:15 am	11	12 Leadership Visalia Alumni Mixer BarrelHouse 6-8pm	13	14
15	16 Visalia City Council Meeting	17	18	19	20 Visalia SOUP Tulare County Office of Education 5:00 pm	21
22	23	24 Business After Hours Mixer Boretti Inc. 5:30 pm	25 Stop Harassment Workshop Lamp Liter Inn 7:30 am	26 Ambassador Breakfast Visalia First Assembly 8:00 am	27	28
29	30	31				

## East African Safari Adventure, Once in a Lifetime Travel Opportunity



Join the Chamber for a slide show presentation - October 4, 2017 at 12:00 pm at the Buckman-Mitchell office located at 500 N. Santa Fe. The Chamber invites you to come and learn about the group tour "East African Safari Adventure" leaving May 17, 2018 and returning May 29, 2018. East African Safari Adventure is a thirteen day tour including 32 meals, round trip airfare from Fresno, transportation to the Fresno Airport and an experienced Safari Guide. The cost of the tour is \$6,474 per person (double occupancy).

Get ready for the adventure of a lifetime, a safari across two African countries. Experience elephants, giraffes, wildebeests, rhinos, and other animals you've only seen on TV or in the zoos. From the United States you will fly into Nairobi, Kenya. After an overnight stay, the group will drive to Lake Nakuru and the Rift Valley view point and end the day with a safari tour in Lake Nakuru National Park. Travelers will have the opportunity to visit the Masai Mara National Reserve for a visit at the Tipilikwani Camp before touring the Mara game reserve home to the black

maned lion, elephants, Cape buffalo, cheetahs and many other amazing animals. Travelers will visit a traditional Maasai Manyatta (village) and experience the culture of this world famous community.



The tour group will leave Kenya and travel to Tanzania via the Isebania & Sirari boarder where assistance will be provided for the immigration procedures. The world famous Serengeti National Park covers an area of 5700 miles and is Tanzania's oldest park and one of the world's last great wildlife refuges. Travelers will get the chance to experience the Ngorongoro Conservation Area with a stop at the Olduvai Gorge in route to accommodations at Ngorongoro Crater. Near the end of the tour travelers will make their way to Tarangire National Park which is host to the greatest concentration of wildlife outside the Serengeti ecosystem. The trip will end with tours of Amboseli National Park where there are more than 400 species of birds, flora and fauna, which makes this a bird lovers paradise. Travelers will depart from Nairobi back to the United States taking memories and photographs of the special moments and unforgettable experiences.

For more information about the Chamber travel program go to [www.visaliachamber.org/travel](http://www.visaliachamber.org/travel).



## Visalia Chamber Launches New Emerge Entrepreneurship Program



On Thursday, September 21st the Visalia Chamber of Commerce launched Emerge, their newest entrepreneurship program. The Emerge entrepreneurship program was created to give new and future business owners a hands on learning experience. Participants will learn core entrepreneurial skills as they go through the process of taking a business idea from

the early stages to a business ready to launch. "Entrepreneurship is vital to the success of a community. Entrepreneurs bring new ideas, generate tax revenue and provide jobs for the local community," stated Gail Zurek, President/CEO of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce.

Building on the success of previous entrepreneurship programs, Emerge will help entrepreneurs to build a business plan and connect them with local business resources. The program will last six months and will include twelve evening classes held at the College of Sequoias Visalia campus. The Emerge program will consist of a cohort of up to 20 participants who will meet with two instructors and be provided a business mentor. Each of

the 12 classes will focus on a different area of business including; business law, accounting, marketing, zoning and ordinances, human resources, insurance, taxes and sales training. During each class session, industry experts will speak to the class and provide relevant real world experience and expertise that class members can incorporate into their new business ventures.

Ideally, Emerge participants are in the process of, or planning to open a business in the near future, or have recently opened a business and want to better understand best practices and utilize available business resources.

To participate in the Emerge program, participants must complete an application, interview, attend orientation and be 18 years or older. Tuition for the Emerge program is \$350.00 dollars. The deadline to submit applications is November 17, 2017. People can attend individual classes for \$50.00 if there is a particular area of business that they are interested in in learning about.

Applications and other materials can be found at [www.visaliachamber.org/emerge](http://www.visaliachamber.org/emerge) or by calling the Visalia Chamber of Commerce at 559-734-5876

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