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# Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- FEBRUARY 7:**  
**Emerge Class - Small Business Law**  
Time: 6:00 pm  
Location: College of the Sequoias  
Registration required
- FEBRUARY 15:**  
**YPN Winter Mixer**  
Time: 5:30 - 7:30 pm  
Location: ImagineU Children's Museum
- FEBRUARY 21:**  
**Travel Presentation Islands of New England**  
Time: 12:00 pm  
Location: Visalia City Administration Building
- FEBRUARY 21:**  
**Emerge Class - Human Resources & Small Business Insurance**  
Time: 6:00 pm  
Location: College of Sequoias  
Registration required
- FEBRUARY 22:**  
**Ambassador Monthly Meeting**  
Time: 8:00 am  
Location: Visalia First Assembly
- FEBRUARY 22:**  
**Web Marketing Workshop**  
Time: 9:30 - 10:30 am  
Location: Brandman University
- FEBRUARY 27:**  
**Business After Hours Mixer**  
Time: 5:30 - 7:30 pm  
Location: Ryan's Place
- FEBRUARY 28:**  
**Travel Presentation Oberammergau**  
Time: 12:00 pm  
Location: Visalia City Administration Building

## New Changes On the Horizon for The Wyndham

By: Nicola Wissler,  
Visalia Chamber of Commerce

As you drive into Visalia on highway 198 you can't help but notice the Wyndham Hotel located just off of Plaza Drive. While the Wyndham Hotel brand has only be in Visalia for two years, the hotel itself has been here since the mid 1970's. While everyone has seen this beautiful hotel from the highway, many have not had the opportunity to visit or stay, so today the Chamber would like to share with you some of the great things that the Wyndham is doing.

The Visalia Wyndham is a full service hotel and convention center offering 256 sleeping rooms, a full service bar and restaurant, room service, a heated indoor pool and spa as well as an outdoor pool. When staying at the Visalia Wyndham, guests have the opportunity to take advantage of the great location and amenities. "The hotel is just miles from downtown Visalia, right off of the highway, and is walking distance to Plaza Park which offers visitors; jogging, fishing, a dog park, playground/picnic grounds, tennis courts, pickleball courts and the Valley Oaks Golf Course next door. For families and leisure travelers these features make the Wyndham a great choice," noted Samantha Rummage-Mathias, General Manager of the Wyndham. "For those coming to Visalia on their way to see the Sequoias, the Sequoia Shuttle picks up from the Wyndham and takes visitors up to the park and back multiple times a day."

For business travelers, the Wyndham offers 22,000 square feet of meeting space with 14 breakout rooms to accommodate meetings and events ranging in size from 5 - 600 people. Business professionals have the opportunity to benefit from the vast experience of the hotel staff, some who have been at the hotel since it opened. Samantha explained, "Professionals benefit from our services by allowing us, the experts, to handle any needs they have, from well-appointed guest rooms to holding a company meeting or a large convention. Offering free high speed fiber wifi through the hotel including all the meeting space and ample free parking sets us apart from the completion."

Besides the amenities at the hotel, here are a few other things you may not know about the Wyndham.

- There was a brand change in 2015 from the Holiday Inn to the Wyndham. Even though it has only been two years, the Visalia Wyndham was recognized at the annual Wyndham conference for being in the top 20% of Wyndham Hotel and Resorts for excellent customers service scores.

- In the past twenty years there has only been one change in hotel ownership, which in the hotel industry is very rare. When the brand change took place the ownership and management teams did not



change which has allowed for services to continue seamlessly.  
- The Visalia Wyndham is the largest hotel in Tulare County, and is one of the larger employers in Visalia with up to 135 employees at any given time of the year.

- With the brand change the hotel is currently undergoing major renovations. Phase 1 of the multi-million dollar renovation was completed in January 2018. Café California was completely renovated and they added an outdoor patio and new menu. Phase 2 of the renovation (January - April 2018) will include renovations of the public areas, fitness center, business center and new market shop along with some of the small meeting rooms. The final phase, Phase 3 (May - November 2018) will include renovation of all guest rooms which will feature an inviting "rustic-elegant" feel.

When it comes to getting involved and giving back to the community, the Visalia Wyndham does amazing things. The Wyndham management team and employees are involved in many local organizations; they volunteer time on non-profit Boards of Directors, participate in Rotary clubs, sponsor local events and donate gifts for fundraisers. They have also donated toiletries, blankets, sheets and mattresses to shelters and local agencies in need. Additionally, the hotel adopts families at the holidays, allowing employees the chance to give back. Beyond local involvement, the Visalia Wyndham participates in a brand wide

initiative called the Clean the World Program. Clean the World has a two-part mission: Collect and recycle soap and hygiene products discarded every day by the hospitality industry and other sectors that generate environmental waste. Through the distribution of these and other donated products to impoverished people, they prevent millions of hygiene-related deaths each year.

The Chamber is excited to see the all of the changes at the Wyndham being completed, and is proud that this large employer is so committed to providing visitors with a great experience here in Visalia.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### Updates to the Trespassing Enforcement Program

"Wait, the program has changed?!" a concerned business owner said from the back of the room. Recently, the Visalia Leadership class of 2018 hosted a workshop for business owners to learn more about Visalia Police Department's Trespassing Enforcement Program (T.E.P). If you have spent anytime speaking to business owners or employees who have opening/closing responsibilities for their business, you've heard concerns about the seemingly increasing homeless population. Sleeping in doorways or dumpsters, starting fires to stay warm, leaving trash (or worse!!) it seems issues related to the homeless have become every business owner's "other duties as assigned". Gone are the days of knowing the one or two homeless in town. Now the homeless population is significantly larger and so are the challenges they place on our community.

The Visalia Police Department's service calls surrounding homelessness have increased dramatically over the last two years and put a stress on our system. In response, they've developed the H.O.P.E. (Homeless Outreach and Proactive Enforcement) team and partnered with local social service agencies to help those individuals wanting help. Officers are often the first to connect with homeless community members and through this program are able to connect these individuals to needed programs and services. For many, H.O.P.E. officers provide a path back to a previous life. For others, living on the streets isn't something they wish to change.

At the Leadership Visalia event, Officer Short reminded the group gathered that being homeless isn't illegal. If someone chooses to live on the street, that's their right. However, loitering, destruction of pri-



Gail Zurek  
Visalia Chamber  
President & CEO

vate property, and many of the other things that can occur when homeless individuals are on private property is against the law. Officer Short shared about the work the Police Department and District Attorney's office have done to legally strengthen the Trespassing Enforcement Program. While the program is a few years old, recent changes make the program stand up stronger in court. In addition to posting signs notifying of T.E.P. participation, now property owners must reconfirm their participation every 30 days. Officer Short reiterated the Visalia Police Department's interest in educating busi-

nesses about how to maximize their participation in this program, particularly given the update.

I deeply appreciate the work our officers do every day. After hearing stories from business owners regarding their interactions with our homeless population, our officers (and business owners!) have to deal with situations I'd rather pretend didn't exist. We have a real challenge. Visalia isn't alone in our struggle, many cities are facing the same issues. T.E.P. is a great short term band-aid to a problem that desperately needs a more substantial solution. That solution will take all of us.

I encourage you to engage in this conversation, connect with a H.O.P.E. Officer, attend a "Coffee with a Cop" and educate yourself about these issues. Many non-profits are very active in long term solutions and would welcome your support. If you are unsure about where to start or would like specific information about T.E.P., feel free to contact the Chamber.

## VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS



Business-Government



Business Relations



Promoting Community



Strong Local Economy



- America's Heritage:**  
June 7-16, 2018
- South Pacific Wonders:**  
August 21 - September 4, 2018



## Kaweah Delta Unveils Newly Renovated Surgery Center

*Surgery Center aims to improve patient privacy and comfort*

Increased patient privacy and improved efficiency in the surgical process are among the key features of Kaweah Delta Medical Center's newly renovated Surgery Center.

Kaweah Delta has added 18 semi-private beds to its pre- and post-operative surgery area as part of ongoing efforts to modernize, expand and improve its facilities to meet the needs of the growing community and better serve patients. Added privacy is an important improvement for patients.

- Other highlights of the center include:
- An expanded Surgery Center; the remodeled center is four times larger.
  - Four of the 18 beds are for ambulatory outpatient surgery recipients, allowing patients to easily walk into the operating area and back to their chair for recovery.
  - Two rooms are dedicated to orthopedic surgeries, where more pre-operative work can be done to improve efficiency in the care of the patient.
  - More staffing including six Registered Nurses and a unit Secretary; an increase from three Registered Nurses and two Nursing Assistants.
  - An area to discharge patients that allows for easy exit out the back double doors to the patient parking lot behind the center.
  - Shorter start times with staff and patients all in one central area with more room.
  - Improved communication throughout the Surgery Center thanks to an intercom system.
- The new Surgery Center will open as soon as Kaweah Delta receives approval from the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.

## Central Valley Community Bank announces Annie Stuhr as Vice President, Agribusiness Relationship Officer & Unit Supervisor



James M. Ford, President and Chief Executive Officer of Central Valley Community Bank, announced the addition of Annie Stuhr, Vice President, Agribusiness Relationship Officer and Unit Supervisor effective October 2017.

Stuhr brings over 13 years of agribusiness lending experience and advocacy for the field of agribusiness to the Bank. In her new role, she is responsible for managing an existing agribusiness lending portfolio and developing new relationships, in addition to supervising and directing the activities of the Agribusiness Department - including a team of nine covering the San Joaquin Valley and Greater Sacramento regions. Stuhr can be reached directly at (559) 298-1775 Ext. 3319.

"Annie's extensive experience, deep understanding of Agribusiness and proven managerial skills will help guide and grow the Department throughout our footprint," said James M. Ford, President and CEO of Central Valley Community Bancorp and Central Valley Community Bank.

## Neurologist Now Full Time at Visalia Medical Clinic

Neurologist Rohini Joshi, MD, is now seeing patients full time at Visalia Medical Clinic.

Dr. Joshi has been seeing patients part-time at Visalia Medical Clinic and at Adventist Health Central Valley Specialty Clinic in Hanford for the past 12 years.

"I'm really excited about being available to see patients full time at VMC," Dr. Joshi said. "There is such shortage of neurologists in the area, and I have come to greatly appreciate the comradery at VMC. Plus I now live in Visalia, so it's very convenient."

Dr. Joshi works with fellow neurologist Zoltan Mocsary, MD, at VMC and focuses on health issues such as migraines (including the use of Botox to relieve the pain of chronic migraines), memory loss, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy and Parkinson's.

Dr. Joshi completed medical school at Pune University in India. She served her internship at San Joaquin General Hospital, completed her residency at UC Davis Medical Center and her fellowship at Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles. She is a member of the American Academy of Neurology.

**About this publication ...**

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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.

■ BEST WESTERN VISALIA HOTEL

(559) 651-3700

Hotel, Motel & Extended Stay

■ DEVON MATHIS FOR ASSEMBLY

(559) 636-3440

Campaign

■ DOCTORS OCCUPATIONAL TESTING SOLUTIONS

(559) 734-3332

Employer Services

■ JACK LAVERS FOR STATE ASSEMBLY 2018

(559) 972-5386

Campaign

■ SARA MCHUGH/ MODERN BROKER

(559) 936-8742

Real Estate

■ SEQUOIA SIGHTSEEING TOURS

(559) 561-4189

Travel & Tourism

■ SUNRUN

(559) 480-3277

Home & Garden

■ TECHCARE 360

(559) 222-6874

Computer Programming & Support

Renewing

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

■ Acclaim Credit Technologies

■ Berkshire Hathaway Home Services\*

■ Carl Nelson Insurance Agency\*

■ Center for Spiritual Living\*

■ Cline's Business Equipment Inc.

■ Commerce Home Mortgage

■ El Rosal Restaurant

■ Espi's Kids

■ Figaro's Mexican Grill

■ Graham & Associates\*

■ Integrated Care Systems

■ Littler Mendelson

■ Main Street Office Suites / Ouzounian Properties

■ Megan Ide, DDS & Shirley Lei, DDS\*

■ Rauber Johnson & Black

■ Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel\*

■ The Yokohl Ranch Company LLC\*

■ Tri-Anim Health Service, Inc

■ Tulare County Fair\*

■ Tulare County Office of Education

■ Visalia Players\*

■ Visalia Times-Delta\*

■ Wal-Mart Store #5956\*

■ Wells Fargo Commercial Banking Office

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

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## California Water Service's Visalia District Invests \$8,851,065 in Infrastructure Improvement Projects and Local Charities

California Water Service's Visalia District reaffirmed its commitment to improving the communities it serves in 2017 by donating \$45,140 to local charitable organizations and investing \$8,805,925 dollars in infrastructure improvement projects, including new water mains, generators, services, treatment plants, and fire hydrants. Four wells were also rehabilitated.

This year, the Visalia District helped non-profits provide vital services to community members in need by donating to the Bethlehem Center, Kaweah Delta Hospital Foundation, Visalia Emergency Aid Council, National Guard Armory, and other organizations. The funds were donated as part of the utility's philanthropic giving program and were not paid for by ratepayers.

In addition to providing monetary contributions, Visalia District employees served the community by assisting with the Blind Babies Foundation, volunteering during the Visalia Emergency Aid Council's Christmas give-away and by serving Visalia Rotary Club, Visalia Lions Club, the City of Visalia's Parks and Recreation Commission and the Visalia Environmental Committee.

"We are glad to partner with these important organizations, which provide such essential services to our community," said District Manager Tammy Kelly. "California Water Service values being able to give back to help improve the quality of life in the communities we serve."

In 2017, the Visalia District also replaced 1.9 miles of water main, installed 746 new services, two generators, and 35 fire hydrants, and rehabilitated four wells. The utility also constructed three granular-activated carbon-based treatment plants to ensure the local water supply does not exceed the new 1,2,3-Trichloropropane (TCP) standard of 5 parts per trillion (ppt), which was set by the State Water Resource Control Board in July.

"Our promise to our customers is to provide them with quality, service, and value. By investing in our infrastructure, we can ensure our customers continue to receive a reliable, high-quality water supply around the clock and that this promise is fulfilled for generations to come," Kelly said.

VISALIA TIMES-DELTA • JANUARY 27, 2018



Rauber & Johnson is pleased to announce the addition of Paula A. Black as a partner of the firm which has changed its names to **Rauber, Johnson & Black**. The firm will continue to provide legal services in the areas of Trust and Estate Planning, Probate and Trust Administration, Business Planning, Contracts and Real Property law. The firm is located at 1007 North Demaree St. (559) 741-1800.



Paula A. Black,  
Rauber & Johnson

Applications are due April 6 for the \$500.00 Pass the Word Scholarship given annually by **Read for Life** to a Tulare County High School Senior. The applications are on the resources page of our website [www.readforlife.org](http://www.readforlife.org). Please help us get the word out to schools. This award is sponsored by County Center Rotary club.

Hey guys! **Mavericks Coffee** is up and running at the new Visalia Vintage Antiques. Grab a fresh cup of your favorite pour over coffee, latte, teas, caramel macchiatos, etc. we are located on the west entrance! We hope to see you soon! (Our Caldwell location is still open!)

**Walnut Park** is excited to be named a 2018 Caring Star Award winner from Caring.com! Our community was named a winner after earning an average rating of 4.5 or higher (on a scale of 1 to 5) in reviews! We're proud to be among the other 28 Holiday Retirement communities who won this award.

**Quail Park on Cypress** would like to congratulate to Mary Manning, our 2017 Associate of the Year! Mary embodies humble, servant leadership and is beloved by our residents, their families, and her peers.



Mary Manning,  
Quail Park on Cypress

When we announced Mary as the inaugural winner of this award at our holiday party, the room erupted in cheers and applause. Mary, thank you so much for showing us all how to Be Show Ready everyday.

In a rare and intimate setting, Randy Bachman weaves together the iconic hits of the Guess Who and Bachman-Turner Overdrive with the often-humorous stories that brought the songs to life. Inspired by his award-winning radio program Vinyl Tap, Randy takes his master storytelling and voluminous musical knowledge on the road and takes fans on a retrospective of his career. The man who is often referred to as the “architect of Canadian rock ‘n’ roll” has earned over 120 gold and platinum albums/singles awards around the world. His songwriting has garnered him the coveted number one spot on radio playlists in over 20 countries and he has amassed over 40 million records sold. Randy Bachman will be playing a concert at the **Visalia Fox Theater** on April 28, 2018 to benefit **Hands in the Community**.

**Visalia Medical Clinic** Plastic Surgeon Named Physician of the Year. Alex Lechtman, MD, was recently honored as the “George Tiss Physician of the Year” by the Tulare County Medical Society, in recognition of his community service. Dr. Lechtman, a plastic surgeon with the Visalia Medical Clinic's Aesthetic Center, has been donating his services to underserved youth and adults since he was in medical school in the early 1990s. He continues to volunteer with InterFACE, a group of physicians that travels to Mexico to perform cleft lip and palate surgeries on children and adults. He also helps with cleft lip and cleft palates in Tulare County through his affiliation with Kaweah Delta Health Care District.



Alex Lechtman, MD,  
Visalia Medical Clinic

# Emerge Classes Provide Best Practices and Industry Knowledge for 8 Key Business Topics

By Nicola Wissler

Visalia Chamber of Commerce



**What is Emerge:** The Emerge program was created to help new and future business owners do the careful planning required to minimize the risk of launching a new enterprise. Participants will receive hands on experiences as they learn core entrepreneurial skills which will help them take a business idea from the early stages to business ready to launch. Participants will build a robust business plan and have the opportunity to pitch their business idea to a panel of potential investors and supporters.

Throughout the program participants will meet with industry experts who will provide background, current trends and best practices for various aspects of business. Some of the areas featured in this program include: Legal Entities & Business Law, Human Resources, Business Insurance, Marketing/Branding, Accounting, Taxes, Zoning, Ordinances, Commercial Real Estate, Sales Training and Manufacturing.

**Participate in Emerge:** Each Emerge class will include a presentation(s) from industry expert(s) who will provide helpful tools and resources which can be incorporated into any existing or future business. Individuals can attend from 1 - 4 individual Emerge classes for \$50.00 per class session.

To register for an individual Emerge class sessions please go to: [www.visaliachamber.org/emerge/](http://www.visaliachamber.org/emerge/)

**February 7th:** Product/service description, management summary

- Legal Entities & Business Law

**February 21st:** Company Summary

- Human Resources, Small Business Insurance

**March 7th:** Market Research, Business Names

- Marketing, Branding & Public Relations

**March 21st:** Financial Literacy

- Accounting, setting up the books

**April 11th:** Financial Deep Dive

- Taxes

**April 25th:** Strategy & Implementation

- Zoning, Ordinances, Permits and Commercial Real Estate

**May 9th:** Executive Summary, Introduction to Pitch Presentation

- Sales Training

**June 13th:** Filing Paperwork - County Clerk (DBA), EIN Numbers

- Manufacturing and Distribution

**Become an Emerge Business Mentor:** An important aspect of the Emerge program is providing meaningful interactions between Emerge participants and local business professionals. Each of the Emerge participants will be paired with a local business mentor who will act as a sounding board, resource, and supporter. Business mentors will be asked to make themselves available to meet with the Emerge participant from January - June 2018. There is no requirement for mentors to attend Emerge classes.

If you are interested in supporting new and future entrepreneurs as they work towards realizing their goals, please fill out the Emerge Mentor Questionnaire at [www.visaliachamber.org/emerge](http://www.visaliachamber.org/emerge) and return it to Nicola Wissler at [nicola@visaliachamber.org](mailto:nicola@visaliachamber.org).



## BOARD SPOTLIGHT

### Vincent Salinas

Access Plus Capital/Small Business Development Center



Salinas

■ **What brought you to Visalia?** I was born and raised in Visalia. I move out of the area for about 20 years and decided to move back to Visalia about 17 years ago, as part of my plan to retire. I have been semi-retired for about 5 years and enjoy being self-employed as a Business Consultant for the Small Business Development Center and now with Access Plus Capital. What I enjoy about the job is that I get to meet people throughout Tulare and Kings Counties and help them to start new businesses.

■ **What is your favorite thing about your job/company?** What is great about the job is that I get to dictate my own hours which gives me the chance to do research on my family history that I have been working on for the past 10 years and came across my Great/Great Uncle Juan Vicente Mastorell one of the founders of the Visalia Stock and Saddle Company back in 1869. When I get exhausted on researching, I take off to my favorite place, Regal Theater on Bridge for a relaxing couple of hours.

■ **What do you like to do when you are not working?** I am a lifetime member of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce, and in its motto it states, *“that economic justice can best be won through free men through free enterprise.”* This is why I have been involved with Chambers for the past thirty years and on the Visalia Chamber Board of Directors for the past 4 years.

## Mike Olmos, Visalia City Manager, Retired, Endorses Warren Gubler, for Assembly District 26



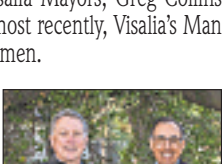
Former Visalia City Manager Mike Olmos announced his endorsement of Warren Gubler for Assembly District 26. Olmos started with the City

of Visalia as a planner, was named assistant city manager in 2005, and then city manager in 2013 until his retirement last month.

“During my years as Visalia's City Manager, I was fortunate to have worked with Visalia Mayor Warren Gubler,” said Olmos. “Warren is a man of great integrity and he has a tremendous sense of responsibility toward the citizens he represents. We need the same kind of effective representation in Sacramento and Warren is the right man for the job. As our Assemblyman, we will know that our values and priorities are being represented.”

Olmos' endorsement is another key endorsement for Gubler for Assembly. Gubler has also received endorsements from Senator Andy Vidak, Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux, Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward, Supervisors Steve Worthley, Mike Ennis and Kuyler Crocker, and former Visalia Mayors, Greg Collins and Steve Nelsen, and most recently, Visalia's Man of the Year, Terry L. Ommen.

“I have a great deal of respect for Mike Olmos and enjoyed working with him all these years for the benefit of Visalia,” said Gubler. “Having his support and endorsement means a lot to me.”



Warren Gubler with Mike Olmos

Gubler states that his primary reason for running for the Assembly District 26 seat is that we have had ineffective representation in Sacramento with our current assemblyman.

“I strongly support Warren Gubler for State Assembly District 26, knowing he will be a capable and tireless advocate for our area, and I encourage you to do the same,” said Olmos.

In November 2009, Gubler was elected to the Visalia City Council, was Visalia's vice-mayor from 2013 to 2016, and has been mayor of Visalia since 2016.

## TKRL Announces New Executive Director

Tulare-Kings Right to Life (TKRL) is pleased to announce the selection of JP Prichard as its new Executive Director. The TKRL Board made the decision to hire Prichard after a national search and interview process, during which former Executive Director, April Kesterson, served as Interim Executive Director. Kesterson will remain on in a consulting capacity to ensure a smooth transition of leadership for the organization.

“We are very pleased to announce this appointment,” reported April Kesterson, TKRL Interim Executive Director. “JP will bring leadership and creativity to TKRL's programs and a deep sense of commitment to TKRL's mission. He has served the pro-life cause, both individually and for regional organizations, at many levels. JP has a wide breadth of professional, managerial and pro-life training and experience which will prove beneficial in his new position.”

Prichard's resume includes over fifteen years of nonprofit and government administration, and his passion and commitment to pro-life work is unparalleled. An outspoken advocate for the unborn, JP has a long and respected history of fighting for the value of all human life, especially for those who have few, if any, legal rights.







## Rawhide Announce 2018 as the “Year of the Cowbell”

*America’s Largest Cowbell to be Added to Rawhide Ballpark to Commemorate 10th Anniversary*



The Visalia Rawhide announced today the 2018 season will be the “Year of the Cowbell” at Rawhide Ballpark. The year-long celebration will be held to celebrate the tenth year since the Visalia franchise re-branded as the Rawhide.

A key feature of the announcement is the construction of America’s Largest Cowbell, which will be accessible to fans during the 2018 season on the Rawhide concourse.

“2018 is a monumental year for us because we’ve now been the Rawhide for ten years,” said Rawhide General Manager Jennifer (Pendergraft) Reynolds. “Under the Rawhide brand, Recreation Park has undergone huge renovations that bring our fan experience up to the highest standards in Minor League Baseball, making the Rawhide brand synonymous with positive change in the local baseball community. This year, we are celebrating that achievement and inviting all of our fans to join the party.”

Since the Rawhide brand was introduced in 2009, Recreation Park has received numerous upgrades. Most recently, the Rawhide and City of Visalia partnered to install a new playing surface in 2017, which was named the California League Field of the Year. The Rawhide also made a complete renovation of the Kids Corral, surfacing it with artificial turf and painting the turf in the style of a whiffle ball field. Furthermore, the club purchased dilapidated buildings directly adjacent from the ballpark and had them torn down to add more parking for fans. Last season, Visalia hosted the California League All-Star Game for the first time in 28 years, which brought visitors and business from across the state to Visalia on June 19 and 20.

The Year of the Cowbell will also include promotional giveaways and special benefits for Rawhide Season Ticket Holders. Fans interested in becoming season ticket holders may inquire by emailing Rawhide Director of Ticketing Heather Dominquez at [heather@rawhidebaseball.com](mailto:heather@rawhidebaseball.com)

“We continue to generate great support from this community, and we thought that it would be in line with true Visalia fashion to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Rawhide by constructing a five-foot-tall cowbell – another nod to the dairy and agriculture industry which our county hangs its hat on,” said Rawhide President Tom Seidler. “We hope that our fans and the local community will enjoy the celebration as much as we will during the 2018 season.”



## SHRM of Tulare/Kings County Presents Safety in the Workplace

Everyone’s idea about safety in the workplace ranges from “common sense” to OSHA, to complex systems like ISO. But what really works?

This seminar will provide attendees with valuable in-sights into how to establish safety processes that work, focused on reducing accident and injury rates. Attendees will learn about developing a foundational safety program, how to effectively implement safety activities, and tips to integrate these activities into operations. Participants will walk away with ideas to use in implementing their safety programs.

This presentation will discuss:

- Foundations of a safety program
- CAL/OSHA - a review of program requirements
- How to implement these activities
- Effective implementation
- Setting safety and health goals
- Integrating safety activities into the operation
- Aligning safety with business objectives
- Measures that drive risk and loss reduction
- Incentives: what works
- Culture: what is needed to establish an actual safety culture, and how does that work into employee performance.

With over 30 years of experience, James has an extensive background in the field of Safety & Health. James is President of Boretti Inc., a professional SH&E firm providing a broad range of technical and business safety solutions.

**Tuesday, February 13, 2018**

11:30 - 1:00 pm

Location: Visalia Marriott

Register:

[www.shrmtularerings.org](http://www.shrmtularerings.org)



## Islands of New England

October 19-26, 2018  
\$3,079 per person (double occupancy)

**8 Days, 11 Meals**  
**Highlights include:** Providence, Newport, Boston, Canberry Bog, Plimoth Plantation, Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, Lobster Dinner, Provincetown, Hyannis, Nantucket

**JOIN THE CHAMBER FOR A SLIDESHOW PRESENTATION**  
**FEBRUARY 21, 2018 AT 12:00 P.M.**  
**AT THE CITY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**  
**220 N. SANTA FE**

**VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
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**VisaliaChamber.org/travel**

## CITY UPDATE

# Connecting with the City

With a new year upon us, many people have asked how they can connect with the City and stay informed of what’s happening in City Hall.

Not too long ago, I had an opportunity to meet with a local Cub Scout group during “Meet the Mayor” (my monthly time to meet with citizens one on one) and I gave them a tour of the Council Chambers. I shared with the group, as I will reiterate here, that citizens of all ages are welcome at Council meetings. It’s a perfect opportunity to see firsthand how decisions are made and how the City keeps moving.

For those that can’t make meetings in-person, but want to stay in the know, Council meetings are streamed via Facebook Live ([facebook.com/cityofvisalia](https://facebook.com/cityofvisalia)) and viewers can catch both the Work and Regular Sessions.

Thanks to technology, we’re able to connect with our fellow citizens like never before. If you’re active online, the City’s Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages (@cityofvisalia) feature everything from breaking news to live streams. The City’s website ([www.visalia.city](http://www.visalia.city)) includes news,



**Warren Gubler**  
Mayor, City of Visalia

events, Council Agenda items, and you can sign-up for “Inside City Hall,” our weekly e-newsletter.

For those who want to really dig in, serving on a City of Visalia committee or commission is one way members of the public can stay abreast of City matters. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis, and there are current vacancies we’re looking to fill.

This all leads me to ask, how do you like to receive your news and City updates? To share your ideas of how we can better connect, email [communityfeedback@visalia.city](mailto:communityfeedback@visalia.city). Or, save your suggestions for the next “Meet the Mayor” and share with me in-person. Check [www.visalia.city](http://www.visalia.city) for the next scheduled date, or call City of Visalia Administration at (559) 713-4300 for details.

An informed and engaged public strengthens our City, I invite you to connect with us.

To contact Mayor Gubler directly, email [warren.gubler@visalia.city](mailto:warren.gubler@visalia.city).



## THE LAW AT WORK

# Is it Legal to Ask a Job Applicant About their Prior Salary?



A job interview can be a tricky time for an employer. The employer wants to gain as much information as possible about the job applicant, yet at the same time, California law prohibits certain lines of questioning that may be discriminatory. But what about asking a job applicant about his or her prior salary?

In October of last year, Governor Brown signed into a law a state-wide ban on employer inquiries into an individual’s salary history. This new law applies to all employers, including local and state governments, and took effect January 1, 2018.

The law expands upon California’s equal pay protections, which require equal pay, regardless of gender, for equal work.

Under this new law (AB 168), an employer cannot rely upon an applicant’s prior salary history “as a factor in determining whether to offer employment...or what salary to offer an applicant.” “Salary history” encompasses both an individual’s rate of pay, as well as other benefits received by the individual. In addition, employers are prohibited from seeking information about an applicant’s salary history from other sources, either directly or indirectly. This means that an employer would not be allowed to ask the applicant’s former employer about the



**Brett T. Abbott**  
Gubler & Abbott

applicant’s salary history.

There are, however, certain exemptions to the salary history restriction. First, employers can review salary history information that is publicly available pursuant to state or federal law. Second, salary history can be discussed if the applicant “voluntarily and without prompting” discloses his or her history to a potential employer. If the applicant so discloses their salary history, the employer is free to rely on that information in determining the applicant’s pay.

In light of this new law, employers would be wise to revisit their recruitment and hiring policies to ensure they are in compliance. Most employers have probably become accustomed to asking applicants about their prior pay as a starting point in salary discussions. Those days are now over.

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



## Need More Customers?

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**[nicola@visaliachamber.org](mailto:nicola@visaliachamber.org)**

**Presented By**

**February 22nd, 2018**  
**9:30 am to 10:30am**

**649 S. County Dr.**  
**Visalia, CA 93277**

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LEADERSHIP VISALIA

# Leadership Visalia Explores Transportation, Land Use, and Economic Development

By Aldiva Rubalcava  
Recovery Credit Repair, Leadership Visalia Participant



The Leadership Visalia class, led by Matt Case and Samantha Ferrero, had an amazing day session in January, focused on

Planning, Land Use, Transportation, and Economic Development. The day started off at Suncrest Bank/Tazz Coffee, where the team met Paul Bernal, and Andy Chamberlin from the City of Visalia's Planning, Subdivision and Zoning Department. There was a lot of interesting information shared regarding the Visalia General Plan for both residential and commercial development. There are many items that the class did not know were taken into consideration when planning the future of the city, for example: parking, noise generation, trash, access to the Fire Department, and how much land individual projects need.

Next was one of our favorite stops. The Leadership class was given the rare opportunity to tour the old court house on Court Street. The team was greeted by Dennis Lehman, a County Official, and Matt Ainley of 4 Creeks, Inc. The court house was originally condemned in 1952, and after some modifications became home to the Treasurer, County Assessor's Office, Tax Collections, and Child Welfare Department. The building was later closed down in the early 2000's. The class learned that this building was the first in Tulare County to have an elevator. The building still has original Art Deco terrazzo floors over concrete and much of the original mahogany woodwork is still in place. You really get a feel for the history of the building when you stand inside the main lobby.

This building is getting ready to under go a major renovation and will become a beautiful hotel in the heart of Visalia. Residents and visitors will be able to enjoy a new restaurant, courtyard, outdoor seating, pool and an outdoor spa. From the roof you can clearly see the mountains as well as our beautiful down town. The goal is to have the hotel up and running by 2020.

After enjoying a delicious lunch at A&W, the class learned about Economic Development in Visalia. We were introduced to Devon Jones, Economic Development Manager at The City of Visalia, and Nancy Lockwood, Executive Director, Visalia Economic Development



Corporation. Both Jones and Lockwood gave the team some great insights as to how they pitch Visalia to bigger establishments who are considering moving or expanding their facilities to Visalia. When an establishment is considering Visalia, they look at data including; population growth rate, educational attainment, high school graduation rate, occupational breakdown, cost of living, and commute time. They even consider sales rankings and where certain corporate stores in Visalia rank vs other stores throughout California.

The Economic Development team works diligently to sell Visalia to new prospective businesses. An interesting fact for new prospective businesses to consider: Visalia has 1000+ zoned acres that are shovel ready and in most cases, these businesses can obtain their permit in as little as 30 days. This gives Visalia the upper hand when companies consider locating a new business to our city.

The last stop for the class was at The Planing Mill. The class was greeted by owner Tim Lewis who introduced us to the new Microbrew District and gave us some great insight into why the district was formed and upcoming plans. The team was given insight into liquor licenses, how difficult they are to obtain, and restrictions within the Microbrew District. The team got to sample some of The Planing Mill's delicious Pizza and hear about their new recipe items.

This was a well planned out day full of insightful information that helped the Leadership team see Visalia through a new set of eyes. We appreciate everyone that took time out of their busy day to give the Leadership class a new perspective of how Visalia works.



## Goals Will Set You up for a Successful New Year

By Justin Levine  
California Fitness Academy



I firmly believe in the power of goal setting. Goal setting acts like a life road map and can help you accomplish your personal achievements. Many people will set ambitious New Year's resolutions like healthier and happy living, losing weight, making better choices, financial independence, quit smoking and so on. These are all great objectives but many people fall off the resolution bandwagon within weeks of starting because the New Year energy becomes deflated and the motivation goes away. Long-term goal setting should be the focus, not gimmicky New Years resolutions.

Here are a few tips for setting goals:

- Write it down. Once they are written down, you have a visual to look at and they become valid objectives. Put some serious thought into what you want and how you want the year to go.
- Action steps. Without action, nothing gets accomplished. Daily work is needed to achieve a specific goal. Write down 3-4 action steps that will help create a "blueprint" for you to

go by. If you try to build a house without a blueprint, you will not be too successful. The blueprint gives you direction and focus and increases your chances of achieving the goal.

- Be ambitious. Setting lofty goals will push your comfort zone. When you push your comfort zone, you improve as a person. See what you can do!
- Read out loud weekly. You should have your goals memorized, knowing exactly what you want to accomplish. This will embed into your subconscious mind and you will be more likely to follow through on the action required that is needed for you to achieve each goal.
- Be honest with yourself. Whether it's weight loss, healthier living, improved finances or better business, does the action support the goal? Are you doing everything in your control to make it happen? Are you consistent over the long haul? Are you setting realistic timetables? Are you surrounding yourself with supportive and motivating people? To me, if you really want to achieve a specific goal, you must be willing to sacrifice and put in the work that is necessary for it to happen. Take full responsibility and go for it!

2018 is here! Attack it with a vengeance.



## Visalia Chamber to Host Presentation on Islands of New England Tour

Join the Chamber for a Slide Show Presentation - February 21, 2018 at 12:00 pm at City of Visalia Administration Building located at 220 N. Santa Fe. The Chamber invites you to learn about the group tour "Islands of New England" leaving October 19, 2018 and returning October 26, 2018. Islands of New England is an eight day tour including 11 meals, round trip airfare from Fresno, roundtrip transportation to the Fresno Airport and hotel accommodations at 2 outstanding hotels. The cost of the tour is \$3,579 per person (double occupancy).

Discover the natural beauty that lies along the shores of New England. Come to know its coastal charm, friendly people and fresh-from-the-sea cuisine. The tour begins in Providence, the capital of Rhode Island. Known as America's Renaissance City the first stop is at prestigious Brown University to learn about culture, history and art from the area. From Providence the tour will travel to Newport where travelers will find breathtaking views on Ocean Drive and extraordinary 19th century summer "cottages". While in Newport travelers can explore Marble House (built by the Vanderbilts) or Rosecliff former residences of silver heiress Theresa Fair Oelrichs. Next stop on the tour is Boston, Massachusetts where travelers will get to tour of Beacon Hills, the Boston Public Garden, Old North Church, the USS Constitution and many more historic sites. While in Boston travelers can explore the Freedom Trail and the market place at Faneuil Hall.



On day four the tour will travel to Plymouth and step back in time to when the Pilgrims landed in 1620. Travelers will get a chance to enjoy a Thanksgiving feast and then arrive at their beachfront hotel. While visiting Cape Cod, known for visits by presidents and royalty, a local guide will give a highlights tour and travelers will indulge in a seafood and lobster feast. Traveling to Provincetown on the tip of Cape Cod the tour will visit the lively artist colony and then travelers can choose to set out on a whale watching tour, or a scenic adventure through the sand dunes of the Cape. The tour will end with a day trip to Hyannis and Nantucket home of the Kennedy compound and Kennedy Memorial. The trip will end with travelers learning to cook like a New Englander during a chef led cooking demonstration.

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



## Upcoming events supporting Court Appointed Special Advocates of Tulare County



### CASA Estate Sale

Cut the clutter and help CASA!

CASA is collecting donated items for an Estate Sale on Saturday March 3, 2018 from 8:00 AM – 2:00PM

If you have items please contact CASA @ 625-4007 we would be happy to pick up your items or you can drop at our office 1146 N Chinowth St Visalia. Office hours are Monday-Thursday 7:00 AM to 6:00PM.

Proceeds to benefit children in foster care represented by CASA.

### Killer Dueling Pianos

CASA of Tulare County brings to town the Killer Dueling Pianos! Join us for a fun filled, all request, crowd interactive, music and comedy show. Sat Feb 24th at Visalia Country Club doors open at 6:30 Hors d'oeuvres will be provided and a No host CASH only bar.

Reserved Tables of 10 \$600.00, Reserved tables of 8 \$500.00 or individual tickets \$50.00

Tickets are selling fast! Call today to get yours. For more information contact JoAnn Bol @559-288-6911 or the CASA office at 559-625-4007.



# ANNUAL AWARDS

*The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is looking for Nominations for the 2018 Annual Awards Celebration*

*The Visalia Chamber is seeking nominations for the 65th Annual Awards Celebration*

CATEGORIES

- Large, Medium, Small Business of the Year
- Non- Profit of the Year
- Woman of the Year
- Man of the Year
- Young Professional of the Year

*To nominate an individual or a business go to:*

**[www.visaliachamber.org/awards/](http://www.visaliachamber.org/awards/)**

*The deadline for nominations is March 2, 2018*



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TRAVEL WITH US

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Islands of New England:

October 19-26, 2018

\* Slideshow presentation February 21, 2018, 12:00 pm City Administration Building

New York City Holiday:

December 10-14, 2018

China:

April 5-19, 2019

\* Slideshow presentation May 1, 2018, 6:00 pm, Wyndham Hotel

Oberammergau

May, 2020

\* Slideshow presentation February 28, 2018, 12:00 pm, City Administration Building

Collette Vacations, Mayflower Tours, Cistline

For more information, go to [www.visaliachamber.org/travel](http://www.visaliachamber.org/travel)

CLIP & SAVE

CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	City Council Meeting City Hall, 7:00 pm	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	Chamber Government Affairs Committee Meeting Buckman-Mitchell Office, 7:15 am	14	YPN Mixer ImagineU Children's Museum, 5:30 pm	16	17
18	City Council Meeting City Hall, 7:00 pm	20	Travel Presentation City Administration Building, 12:00 pm	Ambassador Meeting Visalia First Assembly, 8:00 am Web Marketing Workshop Brandman University 9:30 am	23	24
25	26	Business After Hours Ryan's Place, 5:30 pm	Travel Presentation City Administration Building, 12:00 pm			

VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Who We Are

Visalia UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Every year, I make presentations to local service clubs and other groups about the progress of the school district. One part of the presentation that frequently generates interest from the audience is the description of the demographics of our student population. This is particularly relevant with the recent release of school and district performance data through the California School Dashboard that shines a light on the performance of all students and also some very important subgroups of students. Here's a quick look at some of the state-defined characteristics of the student population we serve in Visalia Unified:

Enrollment in the Visalia Unified kindergarten through twelfth grade program peaked in October of this year at 28,958 students. This reflects an increase of 353 students from the same time in the prior school year. We have a pattern of growing enrollment in our district and have experienced a growth of at least 250 students every year for the past five years.

The state requires that we identify the diversity of our students in a number of ways. The categories that are commonly identified for reporting are ethnicity, socio-economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and English Learner status.

With regard to ethnicity, for the 2016-2017 school year our student population reflected the following distribution: 67.8% Hispanic, 21.3% White, 4.3% Asian, 1.5% African American, 0.8% American Indian, 0.6% Filipino, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 2.4% Two or More Races, and 1.2% Other Ethnicities.

English Learners are students who come from homes where English is not the primary language and who have not yet developed fluency in English. In the current school year, we have 4,019 English Learners, representing 14 % of our overall student population.

The state defines socioeconomically disadvantaged children as those who qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program. Currently, 18,400 of our students qualify for that program and can be described as socioeconomically disadvantaged. It is eye-opening for many folks to discover that disadvantaged kids represent 63% of our overall student population. This is a characteristic that crosses all other student subgroups.

Todd Oto, Ed.D.

Superintendent, Visalia Unified School District

Schools provide specially-designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities. These disabilities may include intellectual disability, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, deafness or hard of hearing, autism, or traumatic brain injury. In the current school year, we have 2,357 students who are identified as students with disabilities, representing 8% of our overall student population.

Relatively new to the reporting of student diversity are the categories of foster youth and homeless children. Foster youth are children who are in a temporary care arrangement when their birthparents cannot, for a variety of reasons, care for them. The traumatic effects of displacement from family are real, and our first concern with foster children is stability in school placement, followed closely by access to the same academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all students. Currently, we have 220 foster youth in our district. This represents 1% of our overall student population.

Homeless children are defined as children who may be living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, shelters, cars, public spaces, abandoned buildings or awaiting foster care placement. This includes also children who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. Currently, we have 504 homeless students in our district. This represents 2% of our overall student population.

It is important to note that the distribution of students in these categories reflects our community at large. Our mission is to provide our students with an education that affords them limitless opportunity for the future. Our charge is to create graduates who are equally ready for college and career, and this means adapting to the needs of every student. We know that kids are not things to be labeled and that labels can cause harm. Students are individuals, each possessing a unique set of skills and qualities. The challenges presented by demographic diversity are not a new thing to our schools. Knowing who we serve is the starting point for providing each student with the services needed to ensure that we provide the best education possible.

The California School Dashboard for any school or district, including Visalia Unified, may be accessed online at <https://www.caschooldashboard.org>

In California, Not All Arbitration Agreements Are Enforceable

Barsamian & Moody

A Professional Corporation

Arbitration agreements can be an excellent tool for managing exposure to costly litigation and the unwanted publicity associated with employment-related lawsuits. Unfortunately, arbitration agreements between employers and employees are not ironclad, and California courts often refuse to enforce them. A recent case serves as an important reminder that just because an employee signs an arbitration agreement, it doesn't mean that arbitration is actually required. Now, before you go tearing up your current arbitration agreement, that doesn't mean they're worthless. Employer-employee arbitration agreements can be enforceable, but under what circumstances?

In *Baxter v. Genworth* North America Corporation (2017) 16 Cal.App.5th 713, an appellate court unanimously upheld a trial court's refusal to enforce an arbitration agreement despite the fact that the employee signed the agreement, and the dispute was well within the agreement's scope. As a result, Genworth will be forced to resolve this employment-related dispute in a court of law.

This begs the question: Why did these courts refuse to enforce Genworth's arbitration agreement? The simple answer is because Genworth's agreement was drafted in a way that overly, and unfairly, favored the employer.

Under California law, courts are not required to enforce arbitration agreements when there is evidence of both "procedural" and "substantive" inequity. Procedural inequity, or "unconscionability" as courts say, is found where this is an absence of negotiations, unequal bargaining power, or elements of surprise (e.g., contract terms buried in fine print). Substantive unconscionability, on the

other hand, exists where the terms of the agreement unreasonably favor the more powerful party. This latter factor is where Genworth went wrong. The court found that Genworth's arbitration agreement had the effect of denying the employee a sufficient opportunity to investigate and argue her case. In other words, while none of the provisions in Genworth's agreement were illegal per se, the combined effect of the provisions went too far in favoring Genworth.

**What This Means for Employers:**

This case is a reminder to all employers that arbitration agreements are not enforceable by virtue of an employee's signature alone. Employer-employee arbitration agreements must be carefully drafted to meet California's requirements for fairness. Simply stated, employees must have an adequate opportunity to investigate, file, and argue their case. Therefore, at minimum, employer-employee arbitration agreements must provide for: (1) neutral arbitrators; (2) adequate opportunities for the exchange of evidence; (3) a written award; (4) all types of relief that would otherwise be available in court; and (5) no additional costs for the employee beyond what the employee would incur if the claim was brought in court. Contact Barsamian & Moody to have your company's arbitration agreement reviewed, updated, or drafted.

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

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