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Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



UPCOMING EVENTS

- DECEMBER 5:**
Emerge Class - CEO Roundtable
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: COS
- DECEMBER 7:**
38th Annual Christmas Tree Auction
Time: 6:00 pm
Visalia Convention Center
Tickets Required
- DECEMBER 12:**
Emerge Orientation (January 2019 Class)
Time: 6:00 pm
Visalia Chamber of Commerce
- DECEMBER 19:**
Emerge Graduation (July 2018 Class)
Time: 6:00 pm
Location: Wyndham Hotel
RSVP required

Industry Summit Focuses on Working Better Together

By Nicola Wissler
Visalia Chamber of Commerce

The second annual South San Joaquin Valley Industrial Summit, hosted by the South Valley Industrial Collaborative was held on November 15th at the Edison Education Center in Tulare. The summit brought partners together to learn about and share industry trends, to identify opportunities for growth and to build new networks. This year the summit also included a series of pre-summit workshops designed to showcase new technologies and processes. The two day summit drew more than 200 people and included keynote addresses from



Andrei Mikhalevsky, President and CEO, California Dairies and Sam Ramirez, General Manager, Surf Ranch. This year the summit organizers wanted to explore both local and international issues around manufacturing and distribution. Andrei Mikhalevsky, CEO, California Dairies focused on the impact of international trade and tariffs on local economies. Using the agricultural industry as his point of reference, Mikhalevsky was able to show the importance of international trade for the Central Valley, and how recent tariffs have affected the industry. He noted that since July 2018 both the dairy and citrus industries have basically stopped exporting goods to America's third largest trade partner, China. Providing historical context, Mikhalevsky discussed different trade agreements that the United States has implemented since the 1800's showing that trade is a long standing national conversation. The presentation was a great way to begin the day, as everyone had the chance to start thinking about how international trade affects their business locally.



The afternoon keynote speaker was Sam Ramirez, the General Manager of the Surf Ranch in Lemoore. That's right, if you haven't heard, there is real life surfing in Lemoore. While the Surf Ranch launched its first mechanically created wave in 2015, the Surf Ranch did not officially open until 2017. The Surf Ranch has made a name for itself within the surfing community having been selected as a stop on the World Surf Tour. During the tour stop, the Surf Ranch had the highest grossing merchandise sales for the entire tour. The event also brought a great economic boost to the local economy through hotel room nights, restaurant sales and other tourist activities. Beyond being a very innovative destination, the Surf Ranch prides itself on the fact that 2/3rd of the employees are local residents. Additionally, the Surf Ranch has made a commitment to work with local educational institutions like West Hills College and local high schools to provide



internships and educational opportunities for students to learn about and work with new innovative technologies.

Participants also attended 2 breakout sessions. The topics for the breakout sessions were designed to meet the needs of local employers and their employees. One breakout session on 3D printing and fabrication, shared how 3D printing has evolved and how the technology is entering the scene in mass high volume manufacturing. The information was both practical and innovative. Another session focused on Cybersecurity risks. Participants learned about cybersecurity as it pertains to hacking vs account compromise. They heard accounts from law enforcement about cases, past and present, and the lessons learned when it comes to internal digital information, the theft of intellectual property and computer misuse. Other breakout session topics included: employment law updates, industrial automation and robotics, and a session focused on energy efficiency solutions and incentives. All of the breakout sessions were very well received, and many attendees noted that they learned a lot of new information that they will be taking back to their organizations.



One new innovative touch to the summit was a live feed of the end of conference survey questions. This was a great way for the conference organizers, sponsors and participants to see what was the most useful and popular parts of the day according to the live feed. The most popular breakout sessions were the 3D printing & Fabrication, Industrial Automation and Robotics as well as the Apprenticeship 101 session. Attendees also noted that keeping up with changing technology, as well as State and Federal regulations are the major factors that are preventing the growth of their businesses locally. When asked to look at future hiring needs the attendees noted that critical thinking/problem solving skills and communication skills are the top two skills lacking in our local workforce. The feedback from the attendees will provide organizers a baseline off of which to plan the 2019 summit.

Events like the 2018 South San Joaquin Valley Industrial Summit are crucial to ensuring that our local economies are strong and stay competitive. The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is proud to be a part of this event, and to support the work of our members in the Industrial, manufacturing and distribution industries. These businesses are unsung heroes of local economies producing some of the highest tax revenues for the city and employing large numbers of people.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We've Got A Good Thing Going

We've got a good thing going here. Seriously. As I reflect on our community, our Visalia, I am struck with how much we have "right". This shouldn't be a striking thought, but I'll admit I spend my days (and some sleepless nights) thinking about all our community needs to do and how to be better. I strategize ways for us to overcome big challenges. I pray for this community's success. But perhaps I spend too much time planning, worrying, and organizing and not enough time celebrating.



Gail Zurek
Visalia Chamber
President & CEO

I recently met a colleague and friend for lunch at a locally owned restaurant. As we chatted, we noticed the owner of the restaurant going around to speak with patrons. He asked about their grown children, the car they were working on and introduced himself to new customers. It felt like we were at his home, in his kitchen and we were all treasured guests. My friend and I commented on what we were watching. As amazing as it was, we easily named other local businesses where we felt the same way and had seen the same sorts of things.

I don't think we're the only two Visalians to have this experience. Since my lunch, I've been on the look out for those types of

interactions. Call it good customer service, being neighborly or small-town charm, most of us can share an example where we've seen it or felt it. Let me tell you, it's special. It doesn't exist everywhere, and it certainly isn't easy to recreate. So how do we not lose it? How do we nurture this thing that makes us so special as a community?

The value of the local dollar is a phrase I've talked about before. But I think more appropriately I ought to say the value of a local neighbor, the value of a local business. My favorite lunch spot wouldn't keep their doors open if, frankly, I (and all of you) didn't spend money there. This lunch spot couldn't hire my neighbor to tend bar and my friend's second cousin to clear the tables if we didn't spend money there.

Our local businesses are what makes our community great. How do we keep those local businesses? Spend money with them. Thank them for their hard work. Tell your friends about their business. Post the great thing a local shop made, or repaired, or fixed on your social media page. Spending your dollars here is what is going to keep our community strong. It also makes all of us a little more thankful for all we have going right.

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS



Catalyst for Change



Community Convener



Champion for Business

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

Visalia Chamber of Commerce Announces Annual Impact Leadership Conference



In response to the request of community members, business leaders and Leadership Visalia alumni, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce will host the first annual Impact Leadership Conference on Thursday, March 21, 2019 at the Visalia Convention Center. For the last three decades the Leadership Visalia program has continued to grow and help build the next generation of leaders in Visalia. Because of the success of this program and other programs, including the Visalia Young Professionals Network and the Emerge Entrepreneurship program, the Chamber is taking the next steps to ensure that there are opportunities to participate in quality leadership and workforce training for business owners and employees in the Central Valley. Cultivating business and community leaders by providing quality continuing education, Impact Leadership Conference will provide opportunities for learning that focus on community activism and workplace skills.

“Leaders should always be learning. After 30 years of training leaders, the Chamber listened and developed a powerful day where leaders, at all levels, can gather and grow. Whether someone is new to their career or a community pillar, Impact will help develop leadership skills at a deeper level.” stated Gail Zurek, President/CEO of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. The Impact Leadership Conference will feature a nationally recognized keynote speaker as well as breakout sessions presented by local industry experts and community leaders.

What: Impact Leadership Conference
Date: Thursday, March 21, 2019
Time: 9:00 am – 4:30 pm, registration begins at 8:00 am
Location: Visalia Convention Center – 303 E. Acequia Ave
Registration: Tickets will be available starting December 1, 2018



Merger Boosts Suncrest Bank To Record Quarterly Income

Suncrest Bank reported unaudited financial results for the third quarter, showing significant gains following its merger with Community Business Bank in Sacramento.

This included closing the quarter with total assets of approximately \$912 million, a 3 percent increase over previous quarter. According to Ciaran McMullan, CEO and president of Suncrest, the bank is on the fast track to cross the \$1 billion threshold next year in terms of total assets.

“This quarter, we saw the full top-line revenue impact of our merger with Community Business Bank with net interest income increasing by more than \$2.5 million or 36 percent,” McMullan said. “Together with improving asset yields, this helped to drive an excellent return on assets of nearly 1.6 percent and a sub-50 percent efficiency ratio.”

Some of the key takeaways from the Q3 report include a return on average assets of 1.58 percent, net income of \$3.5 million (a single-quarter record), and a net interest margin of 4.78 percent.

Income was up 138 percent for the quarter compared to the same period last year.

Based in Visalia, Suncrest Bank is locally owned and operated.



About this publication ...

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Arts Visalia (Young Imagination Gallery)
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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.

Small Business Members:

- **BENEFICIAL STATE BANK**
 (559) 734-5866
 Financial Institutions/Banks
- **EDIBLE ARRANGEMENTS**
 (559) 392-8611
 Florists

Business Builder Member:

- **COYOTE ENTERTAINMENT CENTER**
 Recreations, Hobbies & Sports

Renewing

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

Business Connector Member:

- Cline's Business Equipment Inc.
- Delta Nursing & Rehabilitation Center
- Fairfield Inn Visalia/Sequoia Gateway*
- Innovation Commercial Flooring, Inc*
- RiverCross Church*
- San Joaquine Valley Homes
- Valley Pacific Petroleum

Small Business Member:

- Angel's Maid & Janitorial Service
- Barsamian and Moody*
- Comfort Now Air Conditioning & Heating
- Courtyard Aesthetics*
- G J Gardener - Tulare County*
- Goodies Cookies & Specialty Cakes
- Lagomarsino Group
- Morgan Stanley
- Principal Financial Group
- Valley Oak S.P.C.A.

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

Free Public Preview: “A Holiday Affair” The 38th Annual Christmas Tree Auction - Friday, December 7th

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce invites you to get your free sneak peek of the beautiful trees on display at the 38th Annual Christmas Tree Auction, “A Holiday Affair”. The free preview will take place between 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Visalia Convention Center Friday, December 7th. Bring your family and friends to view the elaborately decorated trees that volunteers have spent countless hours decorating. The preview is being offered free to the public.

The spirit of generosity is in the air as the Visalia community prepares to celebrate and help raise money for local non-profit organizations. Hosted by the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, the 38th Annual Christmas Tree Auction once again promises to be the grandest gala of the year. Attendees can expect an evening of fabulous wine, delicious food from more than 30 local restaurants and wineries, music and dancing.

For over three decades local charities have utilized this event as their primary event to raise funds. While the trees are amazing, participants have not lost sight that bidding on trees and silent auction items are vital to the success of this event for so many deserving organizations working in our community.

This year, the Christmas Tree Auction will help to highlight the non-profits and the local restaurant partners providing food for the evening. This partnership provides the opportunity for the charity and the restaurant to work together to cross promote and ultimately provide a better experience for the guests.

The 38th Annual Christmas Tree Auction will help to support the following local non-profits:

- Arts Visalia
- Celebrate Recovery
- Daughters of Hope
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center
- Eagle Mountain Foundation
- El Diamante Class of 2019
- Genesis House
- Golden State Family Services
- Hands in the Community
- ImagineU Interactive Children's Museum
- Kawah Delta Foundation Lifeline
- Kawah Delta Hospice Foundation

- Love in the Name of Christ
- My Father's House
- Read for Life
- Samaritan Center of Tulare County
- Seven Oaks Church
- Sisterhood of Grace
- St. Paul's School
- The Ruth Wood Open Arms House
- Valley Oak SPCA
- Valley PBS
- Visalia Rescue Mission
- Visalia Police Explorer Post #32
- Vision Visalia
- Young Life Tulare County
- Thank you to our event sponsors:
- Roseland Media & Studios
- Bueno Beverage
- Jack in the Box
- KRC Safety
- Salser & Dillard Funeral Home
- Tachi Palace Hotel & Casino
- The Barn
- Visalia Mall
- Wyndham Hotel
- Financial Credit Network
- Office Source 360

Don't miss the chance to generously support the work of local non-profits and kick off the holiday season with the most festive party in town. Attendees can attend the Christmas Tree Auction on a General Admission ticket.

Ticket Information:
 General Admission Tickets are \$80.00 (7:00 – 11:30 pm). General Admission Tickets include: wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, live and silent tree auctions, live music & dancing. General Admission Tickets may be purchased online at www.visaliachamber.org/christmastree/.

Driving an opportunity economy, The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is a catalyst, convener, and champion for local businesses.



THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
 INVITES YOU TO THE

38TH CHRISTMAS TREE AUCTION

free public

Preview

DECEMBER 7, 2018

2:00-4:00PM

VISALIA CONVENTION CENTER
 303 E. ACEQUIA AVE. | VISALIA, CA 93291

After more than a century, **The Sun-Gazette**, formerly The Exeter Sun newspaper, has moved into a new home. Mineral King Publishing, Inc., the parent company for The Sun-Gazette, re-opened at its new location, 402 S. F St. in Exeter. President and publisher Reggie Ellis said the move offers more consistent telephone, Internet and electrical wiring to handle the increased computing needs of an emerging digital publishing company.

The Tulare County Library Food for Fines program will run November 1, 2018 through December 21, 2018 at all Tulare County Library locations. We will accept non-perishable food and healthcare items, which will be donated to **Visalia Emergency Aid Council, Foodlink,** and the **Visalia Rescue Mission.** We will waive up to \$10 in late fees. If you need more information, please call your local branch.

The **Visalia Rawhide** is introducing a newly revamped Membership Program! Just in time for the holidays, each ticket plan includes new perks, making any type of ticket plan the perfect gift and/or the perfect way to market your business through branded tickets and seating. Give us a call today to learn more at 559-732-4433 ext. 1!

Prestige Assisted Living would like to thank everyone who came out to participate in the annual Truck or Treat event. The children had a great time and the residents loved seeing all of the old cars decorated for Halloween.

The Bethlehem Center is collecting unwrapped toy donations for boys and girls from babies up to teens. The Center is also collecting food donations for special Christmas Food Boxes. Visit our website for more info! <https://bit.ly/2JdkMZ2>

The Vintage Press offers a spectacular Brunch every Sunday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Guests enjoy an array of delectable



offerings including creative twists on traditional favorites and breakfast specialties, cool cocktails and fine wine. For reservations visit: <http://thevintagepress.com>

Black Bear Diner is honored to receive the recognition of #2 in Consumer Satisfaction according to the 2018 Nation's Restaurant News. We are dedicated to bringing the best service to your table each and every time, and we say, "Thank you for your vote, your support, and for choosing us."

Sunrun installed a record amount of solar energy and home batteries this quarter and delivered more than 50% year-over-year growth in our direct business. Americans are united on the value of rooftop solar energy and batteries in their homes. It's the future: clean, affordable and reliable energy, which results in less pollution and healthier communities.



Prestige Assisted Living

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Brett Abbott



■ **Why do you serve on the Chamber Board of Directors?** Local businesses are the lifeblood of any city. Not only do local businesses provide jobs, they provide an identity. The opportunity to assist local businesses, large and small, is something that appealed to me.

■ **What has the Chamber done in the last 12 months that has helped your business?** The Chamber newsletter has been something that has greatly helped our business. There is so much going on with the Chamber, so many opportunities to network, get involved, mentor young entrepreneurs, or sponsor events. The newsletter keeps my business apprised of all these opportunities, while also helping me stay informed on the changing local business landscape.

■ **What is your favorite game or sport to watch and play? Or who is your favorite team?** I have always loved basketball. I played in high school and have coached my children in Visalia Recreation's league for the better part of a decade. As my life gets busier with owning a business, chasing after 5 kids, and serving in my church, I don't have time to play much anymore. But I do love the occasional pick-up game in the front yard with my sons, and watching my favorite team, the Los Angeles Lakers.

■ **If you could go back in time, what year would you travel to?** I'm fascinated with the post-War era (1950's). I loved hearing stories from my grandfather about his experience coming home from the war and working to make American the power it is today. It would be amazing to see what life was like back then. It was also when my parents grew up – I would tell my dad not to throw away his old baseball cards!

■ **Does your family have a "motto" – spoken or unspoken?** My wife and I often say to our children "We do hard things." There is no substitute for hard work, and challenges come to all of us, in a million different ways. I'm a believer that obstacles make us stronger.

VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Seasonal Analogy



I am a baseball fan, and have been since 1968 when my dad took me to an Oakland A's game. I have some clear memories of that game: it was Hat Day, and the A's lost. A bit of research

tells me that on April 21, 1968, the A's were defeated by the Washington Senators, 2-0. Catfish Hunter was the pitcher, and I guess I can say that I saw him play, but I remember being far more interested in the bag of peanuts my dad bought for me.

Being a baseball fan means understanding that every spring brings hope. It also means understanding that every fall there will be 29 teams with disappointed fans. But that's how baseball works. Baseball fans value how their experience mirrors life: You have to work hard to win, you have to be consistent, and a little luck comes in handy.

Baseball can serve as an analogy for school. There is a season for baseball, and every year each team is given a new start. School begins anew every school year, and one could say that a public school career for a student is played out over thirteen seasons, from Kindergarten through 12th grade. A baseball season is long, with games nearly every day. I remember a conversation I had years ago with John Field, then a shop teacher at Golden West High School. John said there were parallels between baseball and teaching. He said baseball players play nearly as many games per year as days we teach every year (162 games versus 180 days of school). John also said



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

we have good days and bad days, but we keep coming back, just like baseball players. This conversation stuck with me through the years.

The analogy can go deeper. Consider the difference between fans and players. Being a fan is about passion. As a fan, I want to care about a team, and the emotion that experience carries with it is the payoff. It is exhilarating to be a fan. It hurts to be a fan.

But being a player is about desire. Desire is what drives us to be better at what we do every day. Passion influences us, certainly, for we care about what we do—but it is desire that urges us toward constant improvement. It can still be exhilarating, and it can still hurt, but we come back to work every day because it's what we're driven to do.

Each of the 3,000 employees in Visalia Unified is a player on our team. Each of us is professional in our approach to our work. Yes, we can be passionate about what we do and the kids we serve. But it is our professional drive to be good at what we do—to be "every day, just a little better," to quote Thomas Keller—that allows us to be successful and to continue in our work for a career of ten, twenty, thirty or more years.

We are approaching the midpoint of the school year, and we have many days ahead of us in this 2018-2019 season. We are a team with great potential, and it strikes me that if we play with all our drive and ability, this can be a year for the record book.



Proposed Cal/OSHA Standards: Indoor Heat Illness and Workplace Violence



The Division of Occupational Safety and Health has issued revised drafts of two proposed new standards. The first standard regulates indoor heat illness prevention. This standard would apply to workplaces when the indoor temperature reaches 82 degrees. Additionally, it would apply in

any of the following situations: when the outdoor temperature is at least 92 degrees, the heat index is at least 90 degrees, employees wear clothing that restricts heat removal, or employees work in high-radiant-heat areas.

Employers will be required to measure and record the temperature or heat index, whichever is greater, and identify/evaluate all environmental risk factors for heat illness. This evaluation will require active involvement of employees and union representatives, if any. Furthermore, employers must maintain one or more cool-down areas at all times, where employees are "allowed and encouraged" to take a rest when they feel the need. A "cool-down area" is defined as an indoor or outdoor area that is shielded from sunlight and high-radiant-heat sources, that is either open to the air or ventilated or cooled.

Employers will also be required to use control measures to minimize the risk of heat illness, including isolation of thermal processes, isolating employees from heat sources, using air conditioning, cooling fans, cooling mist fans, and natural ventilation if the outdoor temperature is lower than inside. Finally, the draft standards will require supervisors to closely observe workers when the work area is 10 degrees warmer than the average high daily temperature during the preceding five days.

The Division's second draft standard is intended to protect employees in general industry from workplace violence. Employers will be required to establish a workplace violence prevention plan which includes the following elements: 1) information regarding the persons responsible for implementation, 2) procedures for obtaining involvement from employees and union representatives in developing and implementing the plan, as well as evaluating workplace violence hazards, training, reporting and investigating, 3) training all employees, even at multi-employer worksites, 4) procedures for responding to reports and preventing retaliation, 5) procedures to respond to workplace violence emergencies, such as

notifying employees and law enforcement, as well as evacuating, 6) procedures for correcting workplaces hazards, and 7) procedures for post-incident response and investigation. Additionally, employers will be required to maintain a violent incident log about every incident, response and investigation.

To view these proposed standards in their entirety, please visit: https://www.cal-oshha.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Indoor_Heat_Illness_Draft-revisions-Oct-16-2018-1.pdf <https://www.cal-oshha.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Discussion-draft-2.pdf>

What This Means for Employers:

Now is the time to begin evaluating the workplace to determine how these proposed standards will impact employees. Preparing in advance is critical to ensure proper compliance with these detailed requirements. As soon as these regulations are implemented, Cal/OSHA inspections will likely target agricultural employers, as well as construction, manufacturing and industrial kitchens and laundries. Contact Barsamian & Moody for help in drafting compliant policies and procedures to prevent violations and expensive penalties.

Many employers grumble about new regulations affecting their operations. Here is a chance to become involved in the process. Employers have an opportunity to submit comments on the proposed language by emailing rs@dir.ca.gov before November 20, 2018. The deadline for sending the indoor heat illness regulation to the Cal/OSHA Standards Board is January 1, 2019. The Board will then formally propose and vote on its adoption. The implementation of the workplace violence standard is further off. Employers who wish to submit comments on that standard may do so by emailing kgraulich@dir.ca.gov prior to November 30, 2018.

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, for individual responses to questions or concerns regarding any given situation.

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

Armondo Apodaca

Retired, Community Minded Individual



Apodaca

■ **How has the Chamber and the Ambassador Program helped you or your business to grow?** The Chamber has allowed me to continue my involvement with my community on a volunteer basis. And has given me opportunities to share my talents with many organizations.

■ **Why is it important to employees to get involved in the Visalia Chamber programs and events?** Being involved with the Chamber allows everyone to expand their knowledge of the resources available and the many varied companies that are members of the Chamber.

■ **The best part of working for your company is?** The best part of being retired is I can give of my time, effort and talents to the many organizations that contribute to making our community a better place to live.

■ **Where is your favorite place to go in Visalia with friends and family?**

I could never answer this question because I enjoy so much of Visalia but since I had a part (my two cents) in making downtown vibrant and alive, I love taking people downtown.



Sequoia Gateway Commerce Center Receives FAA Clearance



The Sequoia Gateway Commerce Center, a highway commercial/mixed use project proposed for the southeast corner of Caldwell Avenue and Highway 99, has received a determination that the proposed buildings and structures are compatible with FAA regulations regarding safe air navigation.

The "Form 7460" review process involved a detailed analysis of the height and locations of the project's various buildings, and other features and involved an evaluation by FAA's planning, engineering and safety technical divisions.

The FAA determined that the project's buildings or structures "...would not exceed obstruction standards and would not be a hazard to air navigation." The report also stated that no special markings or lighting are necessary, explained project planner and developer Stephen Peck.

"We've gone to great pains with this project to ensure that it is fully consistent with all of FAA's optional and mandatory regulations, and is fully consistent with the County's airport land use compatibility regulations," Peck said. "We are very pleased with this finding since it validates our attention to these details."

Mario Cifuentes, deputy city manager for the City of Visalia, noted that the Visalia Airport Administration has no specific concerns in terms of airport impacts from the development, but "given the location of the project in relation to the airport, a determination and the findings of the FAA are required and welcome."

The Sequoia Gateway Commerce Center, proposed by Sequoia Gateway LLC partners Fred Ruiz and Bill Travis, would be built in phases over the next eight to 10 years, Peck explained, and will include a Valley Children's Medical Group Specialty Care Center. The pediatric Specialty Care Center clinic and highway commercial uses would be built first, with hotels, restaurants, retail stores and a visitors' center at build-out.

Plans call for signals at the northbound and southbound highway ramps and other circulation improvements valued at \$10.5 million, Peck added.

The Environmental Impact Report has been released and is under reviewed by the Tulare County Planning Commission, the Airport Land Use Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

For information on Sequoia Gateway Commerce Center, contact Stephen Peck, steve@peckplanning.com; 731-5778.

VMC's Bruce Hall, MD, awarded 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award



Dr. Bruce Hall, MD, was recently awarded the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award for the Northern California Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP).

This award recognizes outstanding achievements of a chapter member who has dedicated his or her life to medicine, teaching and community service.

Dr. Hall is an internal medicine physician with Visalia Medical Clinic, where he has practiced since 2000. Since 2016, he has also served as chief medical officer of the Kaweah Delta Medical Foundation, an affiliate of Visalia Medical Clinic. Dr. Hall has served on the board of directors and as past president of the Tulare County Medical Society, and served on the Tulare County Medical Access Task Force. He is an Adjunct Professor of Medicine at A.T. Still University, School of Osteopathic Medicine.

As a member of the community, Dr. Hall has been recognized as Parent Volunteer of the Year for Strathmore Elementary, and serves as team physician for the Lindsay High School football program.

"ACP embodies the highest standards of the medical profession," Dr. Hall said. "For a physician, the privilege of caring for patients extends beyond the bounds of one's office and encompasses the entire community. I am deeply honored that my small contributions are worthy of this recognition."

Visalia Medical Clinic, an affiliate of the Kaweah Delta Medical Foundation, offers the expertise of more than 60 providers. VMC also offers a lab and imaging.

HEALTHCARE NOTE

A Plan for the Future



Many of you know that Kaweah Delta is facing a 2030 deadline to bring the older part of our hospital into compliance with the State's strict earthquake standards so that the 221-beds housed there can continue to be used to care for patients who need acute inpatient care. For more than a year, we – our Board, key City officials and members of our "Hospital of the Future" Community Advisory Committee (CAC) – have been hard at work on this issue. We have gone to the State to meet with decision makers. We have also commissioned a structural engineering firm to study whether there are any cost-effective changes we could make to get the State to reclassify and preserve the Mineral King Wing for inpatient care. But the more we learn about our options, the more it seems that we will have to replace the 221 inpatient beds because the structure in which they are located does not meet seismic compliance. We are now in negotiations with a nationally-renowned master planning firm that in the next year will study our community's healthcare needs, evaluate the places we use to provide care, and help us come up with solutions to replace the inpatient care beds.

This master planning firm, RBB Architects, was unanimously selected at a special Board meeting on Sept. 26 that was open to the general public and attended by members of our "Hospital of the Future" committee. RBB was one of four leading architectural and engineering firms that presented proposals after Kaweah Delta reached out to 10 firms, none of which were involved in the master facility plan developed for Kaweah Delta in 2015. The final four proposals are available on our website at



Gary Herbst
Chief Executive Officer
Kaweah Delta

www.kaweahdelta.org/masterplan.

Founded in 1952, RBB is based in Los Angeles and has successfully completed over 10,000 health care, laboratory, higher education, and master planning projects throughout the U.S. and overseas. The group was impressed with RBB's experience, its ability to maximize cost savings for others, including Dignity Health Mercy Merced's replacement hospital in 2010, and its No. 1 architectural firm ranking from the Office of Statewide Health and Planning Department (OSHPD). The group also liked RBB's design philosophy, which includes elements that

improve quality of care for patients and reduce costs. An example is elimination of wasted space that reduces the number of steps a nurse takes to get from a work station to a patient's bedside. RBB is also the architect behind our much needed Emergency Department expansion, which is currently on time and on budget.

In the next year, RBB and its strategic advisors will study our community's healthcare needs and help our organization evaluate the places we use to provide care. There will be opportunities to continue the involvement of our CACs and other community stakeholders. Together, we will come up with solutions to replace the beds in question and to propose new facilities that we will need to care for our community, including ways to add new services, increase access, and improve areas that are currently a challenge, such as parking. Whenever feasible, we plan to adopt an incremental approach to building new facilities, which will help lessen the financial impact to Kaweah Delta and the community that supports it.

The Mineral King Wing has served Kaweah Delta and our community well for nearly 50 years, but a lot has changed in the way that health care is provided and in the services that communities have come to expect. We look forward to this next step in the process and to working together to design new facilities that will serve this community well for the next 50 years.

CITY UPDATE

Successes and Farewell from Mayor Warren Gubler

As my time as Mayor of City of Visalia comes to a close, I've been reflecting on what our City Council and I have accomplished since 2016. There are quite a few items on our list of which I am proud and I'd like to share those with you.

We have continued to develop our infrastructure, as evidenced by the biggest public works project in our City's history, the \$150 million dollar remodeling of the Water Reclamation Facility, and the construction and opening of our Visalia Emergency Communications Center (VECC). Road improvement projects continue to roll on, as crews work at the Goshen and Demaree intersection to bring improved traffic flow.

Our Environmental Cleanup Opportunities (ECO) program continues to provide work experience and jobs for our homeless population, and it's been a wonderful partnership with the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County, ABLE Industries and community agencies.



Warren Gubler
Mayor, City of Visalia

I was pleased to work with our Parks & Recreation Department as we became the home of the first Senior Games in the Central Valley. The addition of our new Pickleball Courts and Miki Park are both amenities that can be enjoyed year round. Miki Park in particular is a piece of Visalia history and I'm pleased to have played a part in strengthening our relationship with our Japanese sister city through their visits here and our trips to Miki.

While I have enjoyed serving on the city council, I believe that periodically getting new faces on the council, or on any board, can lead to fresh ideas and viewpoints.

Thank you for connecting with me every month in this space and thank you to all the citizens of Visalia for entrusting me with one of these council positions for the past nine years. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve, and to hopefully have made an impact on the future direction of our fair city.

To contact Mayor Gubler directly, contact City of Visalia Administration at (559) 713-4300.

THE LAW AT WORK

Who Can Recover Attorney's Fees In Wage And Hour Cases?



Our country is a litigious one. Whether it's claims for wrongful termination, hostile work environment, or unpaid wages, every employer will likely be sued for something at some point. And sometimes that unfortunate reality requires hiring an attorney to represent the employer's interests. But who pays for the attorneys' fees – the employer or the employee? This article will focus on attorney's fees in wage and hour cases.

Wage and hour claims (unpaid overtime or vacation, missed meal and rest breaks, etc.) are especially common in today's world. One reason is that employees usually don't need to hire an attorney to bring these claims, as the Labor Commissioner will guide the employees through the process. Also, cases brought before the Labor Commissioner also go to "trial" (i.e. a hearing) sooner than civil court cases, and are less formal affairs.

Generally, in California each side pays for their own attorney's fees, unless there is a specific statute that awards attorney's fees to the prevailing party, or there is a contract between the parties providing for attorneys' fees to one side (usually the "prevailing party").

Labor Code section 218.5 provides that the prevailing party in any action brought for nonpayment of wages shall be awarded its reasonable costs and attorneys' fees. Thus, it appears that this statute applies equally to employees and employers. Based on this language one recent court awarded attorneys' fees to an employer who prevailed in a wage case where the employee alleged, among other things, meal and rest break violations. However, the California Supreme Court ultimately reversed this decision and held that Labor Code section 218.5 does not apply to meal and rest break



Brett T. Abbott
Gubler & Abbott LLP

claims, reasoning that these claims are not claims alleging "non-payment of wages." The Court's ruling left open the possibility that a prevailing employer could recover attorneys' fees in certain other types of wage-related actions.

To avoid this result, the California Legislature amended Labor Code section 218.5 to provide that a prevailing employer may only recover attorneys' fees if a court finds that the employee brought the wage and hour claim in bad faith. With this amendment, it will be even more difficult for a prevailing employer to recover attorneys' fees in wage actions in California, as the employer will not only have to show that it complied with applicable wage and hour laws, but also that the claim was brought by the employee in "bad faith" – something that the law does not define. Thus, employers will likely continue to be responsible for their own attorneys' fees when defending wage and hour claims brought by employees.

For those scoring at home – that's one more tally in favor of the employee and against the employer.

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 (brett@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).

Host A Unique Office Party, Birthday Party or School Holiday Party With Ice Skate Visalia!

The Visalia Parks and Recreation Department is pleased to announce the return of the Central Valley's only outdoor skating rink – Ice Skate Visalia! This outdoor winter wonderland will be located in Downtown Visalia at the Garden Street Plaza and opening day is set for Saturday, December 1st for public skate from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. In addition to public skate days throughout the month of December and into the first weeks of January, the public can also book their holiday office parties, school



holiday parties or even a child's birthday party with Ice Skate Visalia. Holiday office parties are available for bookings Mondays through

Fridays (excluding Thursdays) starting November 30th through December 21st from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Cost to reserve a private party is \$200 for up to 50 guests; \$250 for 51-100 guests; \$300 for 101-150 guests and \$350 for 151-200 guests. Tables and chairs for up to 100 guests are included in the fee. Additional fees for alcohol and security apply. To reserve your party today, call (559) 713-4365 or email recreation@visalia.city. For more information on private rentals; public skate times; Breakfast with Santa events; Adult Skate Night events and movie night events, visit www.iceskatevisalia.com or call (559) 713-4365.



LEADERSHIP VISALIA

How to Build a City

By Cortland Vaughn
Doctors Occupations Testing



planned and coordinated by Cate Fisher (BJ Perch Construction) and Mike Andrada (California Water Service). The class met at Buckman-Mitchell to first hear from Mike Lane, Founder, Lane Engineering, his perspective and experience helped the class to understand some of the basic concepts of planning projects when working with a municipality. He talked about the challenges between private corporations' wants and the city's responsibility when reviewing projects and planning for future land use. We also discussed groundwater usage and the impact on the agricultural industry. When Mike started working as an engineer in Visalia, the population was 25,000 people and it is now over 130,000.

He discussed the challenges of creating infrastructure that supports such rapid population growth and how the city provides water to the areas in need.



with the class to discuss the role and responsibilities of city planning. He talked about the city's new system for submitting building plans

Leadership Visalia Class of 2019 had its second day session on November 9th focused on planning and land use. The day was



After the first presentation we traveled on foot to the City Administration Building where Andy Chamberlain, Principal Planner for the City of Visalia met

online, which helps to speed up the process of getting permits approved. He also encouraged everyone with questions to come into the Community Development Office to find out more about the process.

After Andy's presentation we walked back to the Buckman-Mitchell building where we split into groups and given instructions to design our own pretend city. After we created our cities we were all given a random scenario that



our cities had to compensate for, such as a natural disaster or the necessity of building a huge football stadium. Once we finished our projects, Steve Peck, Peck Planning, gave us tremendous insight on what it takes to put a city project together. We dove into a discussion about the Sequoia Gateway Project that he's been working on for 10 years. He shed light on all the challenges of coordinating a project of that size. He

talked about the tensions surrounding where to put this massive development and the resistance from people who think it will kill our downtown, which was a reoccurring theme. This day session was incredibly eye opening. It was interesting to see how much work goes into development of a project and a city and how decisions are made. The Leadership Class was very impressed with Cate and Mike's preparation for the day session. A special thanks to Buckman-Mitchell for allowing us to use their facility. We would also like to thank Mike Lane, Andy Chamberlain, Steve Peck for their leadership and willingness to share their expertise.

New Businesses are Emerging



Some people have asked why the Chamber is running a program called Emerge, and the answer is simple. When you look up the word emerge in the dictionary, one of the definitions states "To come into existence, develop". The Chamber wants to help bring new businesses into existence and at the same time help young businesses to develop. While this may sound like a simple thing to do, the process of bringing a business into existence is anything but simple.

Or the last four months, 12 future business owners have been participating in the Emerge program and going through the process of creating a new business. The process began with an introduction to a business plan. Business plans are like a map for a business. Business owners can read through their plan and map out their next steps and set short- and long-term goals. The plan allows for them to know industry trends, cost analysis, and help them to create processes and procedures that will ensure the new business will be profitable.

After tackling the business plan, and flushing out the business concept, the participants jumped into learning directly from local industry experts. The experts are brought into the class to help expose the new owners to as many aspects of business as possible. Just because you are great at making soup does not mean that you necessarily understand all aspects of running a soup restaurant. The industry experts have provided real world advice and information to all of the participants that will allow them to make good decision as they build their new company. We want to thank all of our speakers who have made themselves available to answer questions from the participants. Particularly we want to thank our most recent speakers: Lance Wilkins (M. Green & Company LLC.), Tom Mendes (California Department of Tax & Fee Administration), Nick Macias, Jason Huckelberry, Paul Bernal (City of Visalia Community Development), Carlos Alvarez (Tulare County Health Department), and Heather Bixler (Adjunct Communications Professor, COS). With the help of these industry experts the class members have been able to incorporate expert advice into their business plans, and have also had the opportunity to do further research on each area of business so that they can avoid future roadblocks.

In the coming few weeks the Emerge class will host a CEO roundtable. 4 local CEO's will be meeting with the class for a Q&A session and share their insights into what it takes to run a successful business. The Emerge class will culminate with a graduation on December 19th at the Wyndham Hotel. Each of our participants who complete this class will have the opportunity to join the Chamber and continue to receive support and resources to help their business succeed. It is exciting to see the class participants emerge as confident business owners as the continue to develop and grow their new business ventures.

The next Emerge class will begin on January 9th. Applications are being accepted at the Visalia Chamber office. For more information the next Emerge class go to www.visaliachamber.org

A Young Professionals' Top 5 Reasons for Volunteering

By Nicola Wissler
Visalia Chamber of Commerce



For many, getting into the holiday spirit begins with giving back. During this time of the year, many people begin to take stock, and come to realize just how blessed and lucky they are. If you are like me, you start to notice those in the community who have fallen on hard times. I begin to wonder what I can do to help lift someone's spirits, and how I can serve and make someone's days a little brighter. While wanting to volunteer often becomes a higher priority during the holidays, I want to encourage everyone to make volunteering a priority year-round.

In Visalia there are many non-profit organizations whose mission is to serve the less fortunate. During the holiday season many of these organizations look for additional volunteers to help serve meals, give out food, collect clothing and toys and much more. But these organizations exist all year long and all of them will tell you that they could use extra help beyond the holidays. I would encourage you to do some research, find something you are passionate about, and get involved. Become a volunteer. The holidays are an ideal time to start, but let's see if we can make volunteering a part of our regular routine.

Below is a compiled list of the top 5 reasons to give back and volunteer, hopefully these will resonate and inspire you.

1. Make an impact: Looking to make a real, lasting difference in this world? Unlike other aspects of life, you may not be able to control, volunteering allows you to choose where and how to

make a difference. It's easy to get inspired with a cause you truly care about—and it's rewarding to see your direct impact.

2. Strengthen communities: From cleaning up a street to reading to kids at the local library, you can enhance your own life by improving the areas where you work, live and play. A strong community with a high quality of life means safer, healthier lives for you and those around you.

3. Meet others: Looking to broaden your network or find others with similar interests? Volunteering is a great outlet for meeting others. A local club or organization can put you face-to-face with people right in your community—plus, it's easy to bond over a shared passion. You can create lasting friendships with those you may not have otherwise met in your day-to-day grind.

4. Take the lead: Often what a great effort needs most is a great leader. If you see a cause that needs a push or a group that needs a head—take the lead! Many find leadership rewarding in itself because of the opportunity to share their passion, value and inspiration with others. When you take a leadership role, you also have the ability shape the world around you in the ways you choose.

5. Find new opportunities: Doors open when you volunteer. You can widen your social network, discover an organization in your community or finally talk to the person you always see on the bus! Who knows: You may even stumble across your dream job by meeting your future colleague or next job reference.

Because it just feels good: It was worth a mention!



WHY JOIN THE CHAMBER?

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is a catalyst, convener, and champion of local businesses. Chamber membership is your connection to people, programs, information, and resources.

WHAT WE DO

The Chamber devotes itself entirely to promotion of its member, fostering economic growth, and building a strong partnership among members and the community as a whole.

- ACCESS TO INFLUENCERS IN GOVERNMENT
- LEADERSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- CONNECTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY
- MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

COS To Host Upskills Event

On Wednesday, March 20th, 2019, College of Sequoias will host our UPSKILL YOUR SUMMER event for all COS students. The focus of this event is for students to be able to interact with employers or organizations that have actual summer opportunities that will allow our students to UPSKILL. These can be jobs, internships and even volunteer opportunities. We only ask that exhibitors have actual summer opportunities. The event is from 9:00 am – 1:00 p.m. There are no fees to participate. However, exhibitors need to complete the registration form linked below: <http://bit.ly/COSSummerUpskill>

We are looking forward to your participation and presenting great opportunities this summer for our students to improve and expand their skills, experience, resumes, portfolios and overall employability. If you have any questions, please contact Career Services Director Michael Niehoff at (559) 287-4078 or michaeln@cos.edu for more info. Thank you for being a great COS partner.



THANK YOU TO OUR PREMIER MEMBERS:

CHAMPION:



VISIONARY:



REGIONAL LEADERS:



KEYSTONE:



Visalia Medical Clinic



CORNERSTONE:

CIGNA, CSET, E.D.I.S.,

Lamp Litter Inn,

M. Green and Company, Naked Nut Southern California Edison

MEDIA PARTNERS:



CLIP & SAVE

CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3 Visalia City Council Meeting 7:00 pm, City Hall	4	5 Emerge Class 7:00 pm, COS	6	7 38th Annual Christmas Tree Auction	8
9	10	11	12 Emerge Class Orientation for January class	13	14	15
16	17 Visalia City Council Meeting 7:00 pm, City Hall	18	19 Emerge Class Graduation Wyndham Hotel, 6:00 pm	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	Chamber Office CLOSED				

A Sneak Peek: Tachi Family Entertainment Center Opens This Month

After more than 18 months of construction, Tachi Palace Hotel & Casino will formally expand later this month. But the added 8,800-plus square feet will not be filled with slot machines and gaming tables. Taking a nod from Las Vegas and Reno casinos to offer more family-friendly fare, the new Coyote Entertainment Center will include a state-of-the-art, eight screen, 1,100 luxury-seat movie theater; 30 lanes of bowling; more than 45 arcade games — some offering prize tickets — nine billiard tables; a restaurant and concessions area.

But the center isn't intended to just be a place for parents to drop off their children while they head to the adjoining casino to gamble. "You won't be able to drop your kids off here," as children under the age of 12 will have to be accompanied by adults, and after 9 p.m. entry will be limited to visitors ages 18 or older."

As such, the center also will include sports-viewing areas with 60 high-definition televisions, and on top of the normal popcorn, candies and other traditional theater snacks, movie patrons also will be able buy foods geared to more adult tastes, including hand-crafted pizzas, grilled panini sandwiches and fresh salads.

"Coyote will be an extraordinary place for corporate events, team building activities, social gatherings and birthday parties," states a Tachi Palace press release. "With the ability to host 1,000 guests and a private VIP area, which includes six private lanes; comfortable, posh sofas and chairs; and banquet offerings, the VIP area is a perfect space to meet friends, host exclusive events or host a corporate retreat."

Shaw added that the new center will offer a mix of entertainment options not available collectively in Kings County, with the nearest comparable facility being the Dave & Buster's in Fresno.

Though the place is being built by the Tachi Yokut Tribe — which also owns the casino — at an undisclosed cost, it's under contract to be managed by Trifecta Management Group, an Agoura Hills-based business that plans, designs and does industry research for restaurants and entertainment venues that include movie theaters, bowling alleys, arcades and mixed-use venues, as well as managing and owning some across the U.S.

As for when Coyote Entertainment Center will open, minor construction, painting and other preparations still are underway inside, from finishing the movie theaters to testing computer systems to unpacking new bowling shoes.

A soft opening just for Yokut tribe members is scheduled for Nov. 20, followed by a VIP and media event on the 29th, and then the public grand opening on the 30th.

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