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# Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- FEBRUARY 13TH:**  
**Chamber Member Orientation Workshop**  
Time: 9:00 am  
Location: Fresno Pacific University
- FEBRUARY 13TH:**  
**Emerge Class #2**  
Time: 6:00 pm  
College of Sequoias  
Registration required
- FEBRUARY 21ST:**  
**YPN Mixer**  
Time: 5:30 – 7:30 pm  
Location: Train Like a Girl Gym
- FEBRUARY 26TH:**  
**Business After Hours Mixer**  
Time: 5:30 pm  
Location: Visalia Rawhide
- FEBRUARY 27TH:**  
**Emerge Class #3**  
Time: 6:00 pm  
College of Sequoias  
Registration required
- FEBRUARY 28TH:**  
**Ambassador Breakfast**  
Time: 8:00 am  
Location: Visalia First Assembly

## 4Creeks Sees Untapped Potential in the Valley



Why would three homegrown young engineers and a surveyor decide a decade ago to venture out on their own and start a business? Simple. They believed there were untapped opportunities that existed in their own backyard, have a deep commitment to this community and its people and are driven by innovation. This May, 4Creeks will celebrate its 11th year in business and is proud to continue the vision that led them to create their six core services; Civil Engineering, Surveying, Planning, Construction Management, Utility Services, and Marketing. More than just a bundle of services, 4Creeks is committed to help clients by providing thoughtful and effective design solutions that help them meet their business needs. As Matt Ainley, Principal Engineer noted “We look for ways to be innovative, and we love the opportunity to partner and think outside of the box to provide solutions for our clients and our community”.

When asked how 4Creeks sets itself apart from other firms Eric Riley, Chief Marketing Officer at 4Creeks, stated “At 4Creeks, we boil down our culture into three core values that embody who we want to be and how we want to serve this community. We strive to be Citizens, Mentors, and Visionaries. We want to be a part of creating something really special here in Visalia and Central California. For too long, this region has been overlooked and underserved. We want to build momentum in our community to believe in the potential of this area and we’re working collaboratively towards that end”.

One of the ways that 4Creeks is working toward their goal is by hiring the best and brightest talent they can find.

Attracting great talent always involves some challenges. It can be hard to convince a bright motivated young college graduate that they can have the quality of life they want and a high paying job right here in the Valley. One way that 4Creeks is working to overcome this roadblock is through involvement with local educational partners. 4Creeks is involved with the Visalia Unified School District Architecture and Engineering Pathway at Redwood High School. They participate and interact with local students and future employees by hosting industry tours, job shadows and being guest speakers. This interaction gives 4Creeks employees a chance to form relationships with young students before they even leave high school, and the employee get to feel more engaged in the community. 4Creeks also has a strong relationship with Fresno State and Cal Poly to host multiple interns during the year, providing valuable job experience and mentorship to the student which



will hopefully encourage the students to stay in the Valley after they graduate. Keeping great talent local is a very important part of the culture of 4Creeks. Nearly every employee of 4Creeks is from the Central Valley or has ties to the Valley.

Another way that 4Creeks is hoping to attract the best and brightest is by actively working on projects that will increase the quality of life in the region. The very first renovation was the 324 South building, an old print shop, that now serves as the headquarters for the 4Creeks family of companies on Santa Fe St in downtown. Most recently 4CG Construction, the construction arm of 4Creeks, and 4Creeks have undertaken the renewal and restoration of the old County Courthouse in Downtown Visalia. This project is currently under construction and will become The Darling Hotel, a boutique hotel and rooftop lounge set in an iconic 1920’s Art Deco building. They have also been involved in a number of other projects downtown including the renovated Caskey Paper building, which now houses the Planing Mill Pizza, Visalia Cryo, a Jiu jitsu gym and other office spaces. Investing in the local community really is at the core of the 4Creeks mission. Additional projects include the new Santa Fe / Tulare roundabout, Ridgeview Middle School and the recently completed addition to Neighborhood Church.

4Creeks is also proud to have contributed their expertise to design and build anaerobic dairy digester projects that are currently in operation or under construction across California. It is a major achievement for them to be able to a part of pioneering a new industry in sustainable and renewable energy. Working on emerging industry projects is another way to show that 4Creeks is solutions-driven and willing to look outside of the box to collaborate on projects that are not run of the mill.

With over ten years of business under their belt, 4Creeks is excited about what is still to come. The firm is committed to providing engineering design, development and construction related insights to projects, but they never like to place a limit on what they can offer. 4Creeks CEO Danielle Avila stated “Many of our leaders are highly entrepreneurial and have been a part of helping launch new businesses, providing strategic and marketing guidance, and working with our clients from start to finish. If you are creating or building something new in Visalia, whether it is a building or a business, we would love to help you out.” It is a willingness to collaborate along with humility, faith, vision, talent, passion and commitment to community that has helped 4Creeks to reach high levels of success in just one decade.



## PRESIDENT’S CORNER

### Time To Sharpen Your Saw

“We must never become too busy sawing to take time to sharpen the saw.” -Dr. Stephen R. Covey

What have you done lately to invest in the development of your team? Perhaps, an even better question is, when was the last time you invested in developing your own leadership skills?

Life gets busy. Between work, home and community it’s easy to get pulled into a million different directions and fall into the “I’m so busy” routine. Do you want to break the cycle? Do you want to do as Dr. Covey suggests in 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and sharpen your saw?

This March we are launching a long-time dream of so many Visalia Chamber members with the our new Impact Leadership Conference, presented by Gropetti Automotive Family. Building on 30 plus years of the success with the Leadership Visalia program, this daylong conference will encourage participants to explore how they can grow and develop as leaders. While it is easy to focus on the needs of an organization, supervisors or staff, this year’s Impact Leadership Conference will help each of us to focus on personal accountability as a tool for growth.

The morning keynote speaker, Justin Patton is an international speaker and an Executive Coach who empowers leaders to make their voice and presence count. His engaging style encourages participants to take responsibility for the energy they show up with every day. The afternoon keynote, David Carr is well known in the Central Valley for

seeing and promoting the value of a team, taking accountability for personal growth and pushing through despite challenging times.

While the keynotes will provide energy to spark renewed motivation, I’m really excited about the opportunity to attend three of the many breakout sessions. Each block of time during the conference includes seven breakout session topics. While the most popular topics will be repeated during the day, the wide variety of breakout topics means that an entire team can attend the conference and maximize their learning. The keynote presentations will provide great philosophical, encouraging and inspirational content while the

breakout sessions will provide tactical real-world solutions to the challenge’s leaders face.

Registration for the Impact Leadership Conference opened in December and so far we’ve received wonderful feedback from our community (and beyond!). Local employers love that they are saving money on travel costs without compromising valuable content. Young professionals are thrilled to be exposed to so many experts in one place. Business owners know the value of new perspectives to that will drive innovation. As a Chamber we’re thrilled to host a Leadership Conference of this caliber in Visalia. Please join us. This is certainly one you will not want to miss. Registration details can be found on the Chamber’s website, [VisaliaChamber.org/Impact](http://VisaliaChamber.org/Impact).



**Gail Zurek**  
Visalia Chamber  
President & CEO

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS



Catalyst for Change



Community Convener



Champion for Business

# Visalia Chamber of Commerce Seeks Nominations for 66th Annual Awards Celebration



Recognizing businesses that consistently impact and improve our community is a long standing tradition at The Visalia Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is seeking nominations from the community to honor the outstanding businesses and individuals that help our community thrive. Nominations can be made in seven different categories:

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

This is an exciting opportunity to show gratitude and support for those businesses and individuals in Visalia that consistently go above and beyond to support the community they live and work in. The community is encouraged to nominate businesses or individuals who have exemplified outstanding service and commitment to Visalia.

Businesses who have not won a business of the year award in the last 10 years are eligible for this year's recognition. All business nominees must be members of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce in order to be considered. Winners will be announced at the 66th Annual Awards Celebration presented by the Visalia Chamber of Commerce on June 13, 2019 at the Visalia Convention Center. Submit your nominations online at <http://www.visaliachamber.org/annual-awards/> or by calling (559) 734-5876 by March 1st.  

# Tulare County Medical Society Honors Retired VMC Physician




George Skaff, MD, with his son Chris Skaff, MD, left, and wife Judy Skaff

George Skaff, MD, was recently presented with the George Tiss Memorial Award in recognition of his service to the community and service to medicine.

Dr. Skaff, a pediatrician with Visalia Medical Clinic for more than 40 years, was nominated by Prem Kamboj, MD, in recognition of Dr. Skaff's outstanding service to the physicians and youth of the community. He was presented with the award at the Tulare County Medical Society's annual holiday celebration.

The award is presented each year in honor of the late Dr. Tiss, who set the example of selfless devotion to the well-being of all people in the community, and donated services to the indigent and to charitable groups for over 40 years.

"The physicians and staff of VMC are so pleased to see Dr. Skaff honored and recognized for his work," noted Rick Strid, executive director of Visalia Medical Clinic, an affiliate of Kaweah Delta Medical Foundation. "His expertise and his kind, caring demeanor helped calm many a nervous mom and dad. He was also known for his willingness to support new pediatricians. We were honored to have had him as a part of the VMC family for so many years."

Visalia Medical Clinic, an affiliate of the Kaweah Delta Medical Foundation, offers the expertise of more than 60 providers. VMC also offers a lab, imaging including CT and MRI, a Sleep Disorders Center, and a Physical Therapy Department all in one location at 5400 W. Hillsdale, Visalia. Extended care hours are available through the QuickCare and Sequoia Prompt Care walk-in clinics. For information, call 739-2000 or visit [www.vmchealth.com](http://www.vmchealth.com). 

## About this publication ...

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# United Way of Tulare County Announces Harvesting Hope Expansion




United Way of Tulare County announced today Harvesting Hope is expanding and in high demand of volunteers. More information is available on <http://www.unitedwaytc.org/hope.html>

A team of students in Tulare County are leading a campaign called "Harvesting Hope" to help fight hunger in our community. We've teamed up with United Way of Tulare County to spread hope & to help feed families in need throughout our community. We give students an opportunity to be part of the solution. Harvesting Hope is a student led volunteer movement fighting

hunger in Tulare County. What started as a classroom community service project is now county-wide involving over 15 schools in our community.

To date, hundreds of students have picked over 150,000 pounds of fruit for donation to local food banks that have helped feed thousands of people in our community.

Whether you are a student, parent, educator, farmer, business, church, civic group or a community member who owns fruit trees, you can play an important role in this fight. Learn more here and by following Harvesting Hope on Facebook: [@HarvestingHopeTulareCounty](https://www.facebook.com/HarvestingHopeTulareCounty)

The United Way of Tulare County works to maximize resources for the benefit of individuals and communities of Tulare County. For more information, please contact United Way of Tulare County at (559) 685-1766 or visit their website at [www.unitedwaytc.org](http://www.unitedwaytc.org). 

# Sun-Gazette Will Now 'Report for America'

The Sun-Gazette is among 50 newsrooms nationwide to field 50 new positions to report on under-covered topics. Report for America, a national service program that places talented emerging journalists in local newsrooms to report on under-covered topics and communities, announced that The Sun-Gazette newspaper is among 60 newsrooms nationwide that will host a Report for America (RFA) corps member starting in June 2019.

To win the right to host one or more reporters, each news organization had to demonstrate that there is a civically-important gap in coverage and that they have a strong plan to deploy new reporting resources in the public interest. Some focused on geographic gaps, and others on coverage of particular issues or communities.

The Sun-Gazette's application focused on agriculture reporting. Being in the midst of the one of the nation's most productive agricultural regions, the RFA reporter would focus on following stories of how regulations are affecting farms of all sizes, how labor issues affect the poverty of farm workers, and how government subsidies play a role in one of the oldest business models of the private sector.

"Tulare County is among the highest valued agriculture economies in the nation, the top ag exporting county in the nation, and is among the top producers for several crops," said Reggie Ellis, president and publisher of The Sun-Gazette. "Conversely, our county is also among the most impoverished places in the country and is nationally known for its issues with immigration, as well as water

supply and water quality." The Sun-Gazette is one of only three weeklies in the country to host RFA corps members and among just six newsrooms selected in California.

Report for America has extended the deadline for corps member applications to February 8, 2019. The corps member application and information can be found here: <https://www.reportforamerica.org/rfa-corps-members/>

The leap in 2019 to 60 reporters nationwide, and the goal of 1,000 reporters by 2023 speaks to the urgent need to close the local news reporting gap. The program, funded by both private and public donors, pays for half of each reporter's salary and the remainder is covered by the local newsroom and local benefactors.

RFA corps members typically have 3 to 6 years of experience, while some are accomplished recent graduates. More than half of the current corps members have returned to their home states.

Report for America is an initiative of The GroundTruth Project, an award-winning nonprofit news organization dedicated to supporting emerging journalists in under-covered corners of the world. GroundTruth launched Report for America in January of 2018. For more information on Report for America, find them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Report4America/>, Twitter [@report4america](https://twitter.com/report4america), and Instagram: [@report4america](https://www.instagram.com/report4america).  



## 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.

**Business Connector**

- **A COMBAT VETERAN'S HOPE**  
559-799-2548  
Civic & Service Clubs
- **CANYON OAKS FOOT AND ANKLE**  
559-627-2849  
Podiatry
- **JP ELECTRIC & SOLAR \***  
559-733-8313  
Electricians & Electrical Services

**Small Business**

- **GOWIN GREEN**  
559-303-9040  
Lawncare & Maintenance
- **QUALITY FURNITURE AND HOME DESIGN**  
559-222-0807  
Furniture Stores

- **STAR SANITATION**  
800-750-4585  
Event Planners & Supplies

**Friends of the Chamber**

- Dana Arline

**Renewing**

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

**Community Investor**

- Bank of the Sierra - Main St. \*

**Business Builder**

- Angel's Maid & Janitorial Service
- Figaro's Mexican Grill

**Business Connector**

- California Business Machines \*
- Carl Nelson Insurance Agency \*
- Citizens Business Bank
- Jon Stemkoski's Celebrant Singers \*

- Karen Gross / State Farm Insurance \*
- Tri-Anim Health Service, Inc

**Small Business**

- Amtrak San Joaquin
- Beazer Homes \*
- Berkshire Hathaway Home Services \*
- Gubler & Abbott
- J & D Lighting & Alarm \*
- Leavitt United Insurance Services \*
- Mid Cal Property Management Inc.
- Owens Valley Career Development Center
- Patrick L. Salazar State Farm Insurance Agency
- Rauber Johnson & Black
- Realty Stars
- Visalia Players

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

# MEMBERSHIP

## ORIENTATION / UPDATE





FEBRUARY 13, 2019/ 9:00-10:00AM/ FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY VISALIA CAMPUS

245 N. PLAZA DRIVE | VISALIA, CA 93291

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce invites you to join us as we walk you through the member portal on the Chamber's website. You will learn how to update and complete your company profile, update employee records, upload events, create job postings, upload press releases, and create member to member deals. Ask questions about member benefits, marketing and advertising opportunities and to learn about the Chamber Ambassador program and benefits.

RSVP : [WWW.VISALIACHAMBER-DEU.CHAMBERMASTER.COM/EVENTS/CALENDAR](http://WWW.VISALIACHAMBER-DEU.CHAMBERMASTER.COM/EVENTS/CALENDAR)

Visalia Chamber of Commerce | T: 559-734-5876 | [www.visaliachamber.org](http://www.visaliachamber.org)

**ServiceMaster by Benevento** is proud to announce the promotion of Dan Carpenter to Chief Operating Officer. Tony Benevento stated, "Dan's integrity and his compassion for the company, customers and employees are most likely his greatest strengths." Dan's hard work and dedication can be seen through the many construction projects his team has handled in the past nine years. We are proud to have Dan as our new COO of ServiceMaster by Benevento as we enter into our 34th year of business.



donating a car to this most deserving woman. Congratulations to Sam Bruce as he has begun his term as 2nd Vice President with National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA).

Sam will serve as 2nd Vice President for the next 2 years. Sam is dedicated to putting **Visalia Ceramic Tile** at the forefront of the Tile Industry by being part of the leadership of the NTCA. Evidence of this is the opportunities that have been created for VCT to host its own NTCA Workshop, being a part of the Coverings Tile Conference by tiling Tiny Homes and being one of the first tile companies in the United States to have its own Tile Finisher Apprenticeship Program.

**Tachi Palace Hotel & Casino** would like to invite you to visit their spa. New year, new you! Visit The Spa at Tachi Palace to try out some of our new organic farmhouse fresh products. Every product is super lush & will leave your skin looking fresh as a daisy!

At **Genesis House** we often times get asked, "What can I donate, What do you need?" We have a needs list on our website, but currently, we have NEED of BINS with LIDS to keep the current donations clean, neat and tidy. Donation drop off hours are M-F from 9-5pm. And don't forget to check out our website too.

**Visalia Mall** is excited to finally announce that Urban Café has leased 2,000 SF space in the new Restaurant building on the corner of Mooney Blvd and Beech St. We promise you a superb sandwich, a delicious salad, and an excellent value. Anyone can make you a sandwich, but to create a delicious, nutritious, affordable meal, it takes culinary expertise, farm-fresh ingredients, award-winning recipes and an unwavering commitment to quality. California Fish Grill - Fresh Seafood Eatery has leased 3,000 SF of the new restaurant building. California Fish Grill is crazy about fish. Committed to those who crave, catch, and cook it. We've been grilling and crafting delicious, healthy, seafood favorites for our growing family of loyal guests. Pledged to have respect for the ocean, we promise that our seafood can be enjoyed for years to come by partnering with reputable fisheries that provide the freshest wild-caught and responsibly farm-raised fish.

**BOARD SPOTLIGHT**

**Thomas Rayner**



Thomas Rayner is the Chief Operating Officer, Sr. VP at Kaweah Delta Health Care District

**Why do you serve on the Chamber Board of Directors?**

Serving on the Chamber Board gives me a better understanding of the issues that face our community at large that may not always center on health care but can impact a person's health. Knowing about these issues allows us to ensure that we are meeting the community's health needs. Being on the Board is also an opportunity to engage the Chamber and its members about issues we face at Kaweah Delta as a publicly-owned community health care organization, so that whenever possible we can work together to reach common goals and collectively advocate to improve our community.

**What has the Chamber done in the last 12 months that has helped your business?**

The Chamber is actively engaged in helping us educate the community about services and programs that we offer at Kaweah Delta. In the last 12 months, the Chamber helped us publicize openings for several community groups we were forming to better engage with our community following the 2016 defeat of Measure H. The general obligation bond was intended to help fund Kaweah Delta's initial proposal for a "new acute care hospital" to partially replace a sizeable portion of the seismically-non-compliant acute care beds located in Kaweah Delta's Mineral King Wing. We received 130 applications from key individuals for 60 spots on the volunteer committees, formed around community relations, health care needs for today and tomorrow and the hospital of the future. Working with the community has been a phenomenal experience, to say, 'OK community, we have got to figure this out a different way,' and in the long run, we are going to end up with a better solution from doing that.

**What motivates you to work hard?**

I want to feel that I am making a positive difference and having an impact in people's lives every day.

**Who would you want to be stranded with on a deserted island?**

My beloved wife, Barbara.

**If you could go back in time, what year would you travel to?**

1992; the year Barbara and I got married.

**Who would you want to play you in a movie of your life?**

Chris Hemsworth

**What's your favorite family tradition?**

Visiting and hiking the National Parks.

**What was your first job?**

My first official job in junior high school was as a busboy at a restaurant.

**VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**College and Career Ready for the Future**



We are in a time of great change in education, and one of the most impactful changes for schools and communities is the expectation that students emerge "college and career ready" from their public school



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

experience. While it has long been the target for school districts to produce graduates that are ready for successful adult life, current accountability efforts have changed that target in two significant ways.

The first change is that students are expected to be college and career ready upon graduation. The "and" in that statement is critical, for it establishes that to be successful a young adult must leave high school with skills that make him or her ready to enter the workforce successfully and also be able to engage in postsecondary education that can lead to advanced training, certification or academic degrees. In short, all of our graduates are expected to be on a path that leads them to a successful and productive adult life.

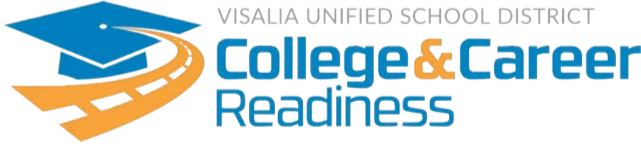
Second, the phrase "college and career ready" has been defined for us. The College and Career Performance Indicator is part of the California School Dashboard that was first published in 2017. The College and Career Indicator is a composite of a number of factors, including career technical education pathway completion, performance on annual state assessments in English language arts and mathematics, Advanced Placement exams, college courses taken while in high school, completion of California State University or University of California entrance requirements, receipt of the State Seal of Biliteracy, or completion of a program in leadership or military science. It is important to note that this indicator identifies students who exceeded basic graduation requirements and met the performance criteria across their high school careers. For the Class of 2018, 38.6% of Visalia Unified graduates attained the Prepared level on the College and Career Indicator. For reference, results for 2018 show 42.4% of all California

seniors attained the Prepared level. The movement to prepare students for college and career goes deeper than the efforts of K-12 school districts: workforce readiness is also influencing colleges and other agencies. Public schools, community colleges and universities are being encouraged to work more closely than ever before to coordinate pathways for students across their systems. This coordination includes outreach, advisement, and alignment of programs that makes access to postsecondary education easier and also more focused on outcome and career preparation. One of the advantages that we have locally is a strong collaboration that brings together public school districts, postsecondary institutions and workforce development partners. The Tulare Kings College and Career Collaborative (TKCC) emerged from the work surrounding the creation of Linked Learning Academies and the further development of career pathways at a number of high schools in both counties over the past five years. It was established to provide guidance and professional development in career readiness efforts and to attract financial support for this work. TKCC brings together twelve public school districts, two county offices of education, five colleges, and multiple workforce development agencies. Coordination at this level is complex, and TKCC and its member agencies, including Visalia Unified School District, Tulare County Office of Education, College of the Sequoias, California State University, Fresno Regional and Tulare County Workforce Investment Boards, have received recognition and attracted attention that has brought funding, technical support and influence to our area that have direct impact on Visalia students.

Visalia Unified has a long history of supporting career technical education. Now that the focus has broadened to include college and career readiness, we have increased potential to bring modern and relevant programs well into the 21st century, all in the interest of providing our students with bright and successful futures.



**Visalia Partners in Education Supports Career Technical Education**



Visalia Unified School District and local industries have partnered to create an advisory committee called Visalia Partners in Education (VPIE). Visalia Partners in Education (VPIE) supports the partnership that includes Visalia Unified School District (VUSD), the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, the City of Visalia and Visalia businesses and organizations. VPIE advocates for college and career readiness in education and promotes 21st century workforce initiatives that support VUSD's Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways and Linked Learning academies.

The key to CTE and Linked Learning academy programs is the combination of employability skills with technical and academic knowledge. With the support of VPIE, Visalia Unified continually works to expand CTE programs and Linked Learning academies through work-based learning experiences such as leadership and employability skills development, job shadows, mentorships, and internships that bridge the gap between high school and college or career.

Linked Learning academies at VUSD give high school students the opportunity to choose from nine career-themed academies: El Diamante High School's Media Arts Academy and Sports Medicine (STRONG) Academy; Golden West High School's Business and Finance Academy and First Responder Academy; Mt. Whitney High School's Computer Science Academy and Health Science Academy; Redwood High School's Engineering and Architecture Academy and Law and Justice Academy; and VTEC High School's Agriculture Academy.

In addition to supporting the Linked Learning academies, our local industry



partners support our Career Technical Educational pathways in the high schools as well. CTE pathways are programs of study that involve a multiyear sequence of courses that integrate academics with technical and industry knowledge. These educational opportunities provide students with a pathway to postsecondary education and careers. CTE pathways available through VUSD include Automotive Repair, Ag Mechanics, Ag Technology, Ag Environmental Engineering, Welding, Medical Assisting, Nursing Assisting, Animal Science, Plant Science, Ornamental Horticultural, Forestry, Media Arts, Woodworking, Construction, Food Service and Hospitality, Business Management, Child Development, and Graphic Arts.

Visalia Unified School District continues to expand work-based experiences and is always looking for industry professionals to be involved with our programs. Visalia Partners in Education provides students the opportunity for job shadowing, internships, and professional mentoring. If you would like to provide mentorship or participate in our Visalia Partners in Education or you would like more information regarding VUSD Academies and pathways, please contact Visalia Unified School District at (559) 730-7510.



**New Date Announced for Visalia Education Foundation Fundraiser**



The date of the Visalia Education Foundation fundraiser "For the Love of Art" dinner and art auction has been changed. The caterer that we were using for that event was one of the restaurateurs that was devastated by the downtown Visalia fire on December 26, 2018. **The new date for our event is FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2019.**

"For the Love of Art" will blend together an art show, dinner and silent auction featuring the work of Visalia Unified high school artists. The show and auction will include paintings, pottery, sculptures, leatherwork, wood work projects, jewelry, fashion designs, welding and more. Proceeds from the items auctioned will be divided equally between the artist and the Visalia Education Foundation to be used for grants, scholarships and other projects that will benefit VUSD students.

Applications for art submission are available online at: [www.visaliaedfoundation.org](http://www.visaliaedfoundation.org). \$20 tickets for the dinner and auction entrance are also available on our website. Each high school artist that makes a contribution to the auction will receive one complimentary ticket. For more information see our website or email [art@visaliaedfoundation.org](mailto:art@visaliaedfoundation.org).

## E-Verify Unavailable Due to Shutdown

In the event you use E-Verify, and have tried to process new hires, this is to let you know that it is not you (the company), its them (DHS). E-Verify is currently not available - it is part of the federal government shutdown.

If you access the site, a large red banner at the top now reads: "Information on this website may not be up to date. Transactions submitted via this website might not be processed and we will not be able to respond to inquiries until after appropriations are enacted."

Until the shutdown is over, funding is authorized, and DHS has a chance to ramp the program back up, employers cannot enroll in E-Verify. Those already participating cannot access their E-Verify accounts; create a case; view or take action on any case; add, delete, or edit accounts; reset passwords; edit company information; terminate accounts; or run reports.

Workers will not be able to resolve questions about their status. The DHS cannot resolve E-Verify Tentative Nonconfirmations (TNCs) during the shutdown. In addition, myE-Verify will be unavailable, and employees will not be able to access their myE-Verify accounts.

During the shutdown, DHS announced the following new policies to minimize the burden on both employers and employees: First, the "three-day rule" for creating E-Verify cases is suspended for cases affected by the unavailability of E-Verify. Second, the time period during which employees may resolve TNCs will be extended. The number of days E-Verify is not available will not count toward the days the employee has to begin the process of resolving their TNCs. DHS will provide additional guidance regarding "three-day rule" and time period to resolve TNCs deadlines once operations resume.

Employers may not take adverse action against an employee because the E-Verify case is in an interim case status, including while the employee's case is in an extended interim case status due to the unavailability of E-Verify.

### What This Means for Employers:

Whether your company uses the E-Verify does not change employers obligation to complete work authorization. Employers must complete the Form I-9 no later than the third business day after an employee starts work for pay, and comply with all other Form I-9 requirements. Contact Barsamian & Moody for help maintaining compliance during the government shutdown.

*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.*

## Measure A Oversight Committee Volunteers Needed

Visalia Unified School District is seeking applicants for the Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee.

In accordance with state law, the committee will consist of members who would each be expected to serve no less than one two-year term and no more than six consecutive two-year terms. No compensation is provided.

The law requires that at least one member come from each of the following categories: be active in a business organization representing the business community; be active in a senior citizens' organization; be active in a taxpayers' organization; be a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in VUSD; and one member be both a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the district and active in a parent-teacher organization such as the Parent Teacher Association. The committee must also include an employee or official of VUSD.

The committee will meet periodically to keep members informed as to the investment of Measure A funds and to answer committee member questions. Information on the committee will be housed in the www.vusd.org web site once the committee is officially formed. All meetings will be open to the public.

The first committee meeting is expected to be held in spring 2019. For details and to apply, contact Robert Groeber, 730-7529; rgroeber@vusd.org.

## Sequoia Gateway Is An Environmental Plus

By Fred Ruiz and Bill Travis  
Owners, Sequoia Gateway Commerce Center



Commission and approved by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

Many were singing the praises of the proposed tenants in the project, including new hotels, restaurants and, of course, the Valley Children's Pediatric Medical Clinic.

Much of the support from the key decision-making bodies is a reflection of the fact that this project has been reviewed, revised, analyzed and scrutinized for almost a decade, and it includes a wealth of environmentally progressive features.

Sequoia Gateway is actually going to contribute to a healthier environment in a number of ways:

- The commercial/retail use of the land is projected to use less than one quarter of the groundwater now used by the project site – going from 95 acre feet of water per year versus 386 acre feet of water for agricultural use
- This reduction in use will free up groundwater resources for other ag uses
- The project will offer a variety of environmentally friendly features, including electric charging stations; low water use landscaping; capture or elimination of wasteful water run-off; bus stops and bike paths; and it will be the first commercial project to use recycled water for landscape irrigation.
- The project will also include mandatory solar photovoltaic panels on

Sequoia Gateway, the project proposed for the southeast corner of Caldwell Avenue and Highway 99, has been blessed by the Tulare County Planning

the project's larger buildings, and dozens of other features recommended (but not required) by the local air pollution control district.

Because of the wealth of environmentally friendly features, the Tulare County Farm Bureau, which exists to protect ag land and the interests of the farming community that is key to our economy, did not oppose the project.

The County's General Plan has allowed for a project like this for nearly a decade and the entire County will benefit from the generation of new revenue.

Whether you live in the unincorporated areas of Tulare County or an incorporated city, the shortage of County funds impacts us all. The jails, the court system, the roads, the county bridges and water delivery systems ... they're all funded through the County.

At buildout, Sequoia Gateway is estimated to also provide \$17.6 million per year to some of our most critical local agencies, including \$200,500 per year to COS, \$1.2 million per year to Visalia Unified School District, \$1.75 million per year to Measure R for road improvements and \$8.1 million to other local agencies.

Sequoia Gateway won't solve the ongoing financial challenges. Even after the completion of the Sequoia Gateway project, the County's share of countywide sales taxes would only increase to 18.2 percent to support the County's 30.3 percent share of the population – but it's a step in the right direction.

We care about the families, farms and future of Tulare County and we look forward to the positive impact of Sequoia Gateway.



## SHRM Tulare/Kings Presents: The Positive Self Motivated Mindset



Michael J. Fit is a powerful and charismatic motivational speaker from Visalia California.

A Certified Life Coach, Certified Relationship Coach, Dating Coach and Certified Personal Trainer, he believes in "Being Fit Physically As Well As Mentally." The phrase originating from his YouTube channel, "Michael J Fit," he develops and teaches advanced techniques, mindsets and behaviors to enhance one's character that in turn increase both personal and professional performance. Areas of expertise include, confidence, motivation, positivity, communication, body language and conscious awareness. Any audience Michael engages is in store for high value content, ground breaking information, authentic strategies and a highly motivational and entertaining experience.

- Why and how negative thoughts enter our minds
- How to eliminate negative thought patterns
- How to reverse negative emotional reactions
- How to reset your mind for positive thinking
- Authentic techniques on how to motivate yourself
- Anti-stress and anxiety exercises
- Peaceful communication methods
- Daily actions to transform into your best self

**February 12, 2019 – 11:30 – 1:00 pm,**

Registration begins at 11:00 am.

The Marriott in Visalia, 300 S. Court St. Visalia, CA 93291

Register: [www.shrmtularekings.org](http://www.shrmtularekings.org)

Questions: Contact Ashley Marroquin [membership@shrmtularekings.org](mailto:membership@shrmtularekings.org)

### CITY UPDATE

## Local Service, Local Staff

By City Staff

2019 has brought changes to Visalia's utility billing, as the City has transitioned back to local service and local staff to improve utility billing customer service for all Visalians.

The change took effect on January 1, 2019 and utility bills (for trash, sewer, groundwater and storm drain services) now come directly from the City and payments are made to the City.

Many have asked, why the change? Most recently, the City was contracted with a third-party agency to handle utility billing. By bringing this service in-house, the City is providing enhanced customer service, delivered by City of Visalia staff members.

What has changed? As residents have noticed, utility billing account numbers and the mailing address for payments has changed, as the City of Visalia Utility Billing Center team is working within a new program to

manage accounts. The other main change is that mailed payments are now sent to our payment processing center in the City of Industry. However, in-person payments are still accepted at City Hall West (707 W. Acequia), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., or you can drop your sealed envelope at the 24-hour drop box located at the same address.

What hasn't changed? The switch back to local service and local staff came at no cost to Visalians as rates have not been raised. In fact, we have a discount program for seniors, which was already in place, that allows households where the principal resident is 60 years or better, to apply for a reduction in the amount paid for sewer and refuse.

For questions on utility billing, residents can visit [www.visalia.city/utilitybilling](http://www.visalia.city/utilitybilling), call the Utility Billing Center at 1-833-COV-BILL or connect with the City on social media @CityofVisalia.



### THE LAW AT WORK

## Simple Safeguards To Prevent Workplace Violence



It goes without saying that workplace violence is an incredibly serious issue. Recent data shows that approximately

2 million American workers report being victims of some form of workplace violence each year. It's important to note that this number only accounts for reported incidents – the actual amount is surely much higher.

Employers can be liable for workplace violence under the following legal theories: (1) negligent hiring or retention of an employee with violent tendencies; (2) when the violence occurs within the course and scope of employment, or when the employer could reasonably have foreseen the violence; (3) an employer's failure to warn, when the employer has actual knowledge of a known danger; and (4) premises liability, as the owner of the property on which the violent act occurred.

There are, however, safeguards that employers can implement to reduce the likelihood of workplace violence. Some preventative measures include:

- good lighting at the workplace – including parking lots or parking garages;
- adequate security in parking and common areas;
- limiting access to work areas;



**Brett T. Abbott**  
Gubler & Abbott LLP

- alarms and surveillance cameras, where appropriate;
- discouraging visits from former employees;
- educating supervisors about characteristics associated with potentially violent employees;
- training supervisors in conflict resolution;
- Periodically surveying employee perceptions about working conditions and problems with the work environment;
- implementing policies concerning violence and harassment that encourage reporting of incidents;
- after investigating an incident, taking appropriate action to promptly counsel, discipline, or terminate the violent employee.

In conclusion, while it may not be possible to completely eliminate the possibility of violence at the workplace, employers are wise to do whatever is in their power to prevent it.

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](mailto: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](http://www.thecalifornialawyers.com)).



# ANNUAL AWARDS

## Submit Your Nominations Today!

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominations for the 66th 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 business go to [www.visaliachamber.org/awards](http://www.visaliachamber.org/awards)

The deadline for nominations is March 1, 2019

LEADERSHIP VISALIA

# Developing Visalia's Economy

By Nicholas Havard, Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Leadership Visalia

Whether we like it or not, things in the world are constantly changing around us. Maybe it's a new neighborhood pizza joint right around the corner from



the socially responsible and legal practices that the business implements daily. Canna Can Help has been able to reinvest money back into the community in furthering the community's economic development.

your house or maybe it's a medicinal marijuana dispensary that just moved to town. This type of thing happens everywhere and is known as economic development. Economic development refers to the progress in an economy and can be achieved through the adoption of new technologies, moving from predominantly agriculture-based to industry-based, and overall increasing the quality of life in the community.



I think I speak for everyone when I say that the level of professionalism and generosity that was shown to our class during the visit was pleasantly surprising and enlightening.

Thanks to the phenomenal planning of Lisa Alvarado (Parks and Rec.) and Detective Jacob Sorenson (Visalia Police Dept.), the Leadership Visalia Class of 2018-19 was able to see economic development through a different lens. In order to understand how new businesses, move to Visalia, our class met with Nancy Lockwood, owner and operator of the Lockwood Agency. Nancy explained how the city of Visalia promotes economic development within the community through careful planning and strategic incentivizing. As a class, we learned that industrial growth, a thriving downtown, regional retail presence, quality workforce and entrepreneurship plus small business support are the pillars that lead to maintaining consistent economic growth and development. We discussed how the city incentivizes large industrial organizations to move here. As a class we also discussed how organizations are drawn to Visalia because of quality of life factors like housing, education etc. For example, there is now a UPS facility in the Visalia industrial park. The location allows UPS easy access to the interstates and railways, with housing prices and availability that fit the needs of their workforce.

Last, but certainly not least, we had the opportunity to meet with Tim Lewis and hear about how he has been able to grow his business within the community, since it's founding in 2013. Tim founded The Planing Mill with his former business partner and recently relocated the restaurant to their current location (778 E. Center Ave.). In 2017, The Planing Mill received the Small Business of the Year award from the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. After meeting Tim you certainly can see how he made that happen. His understanding of the company culture is refreshing and he makes certain he invests in his employees. Not only does Tim improve the quality of life for every member of his staff, but he understands how his companies culture fills a specific niche in the community. Tim feels indebted and grateful to the community for all of the support he has received.



Following our session with Nancy Lockwood, we took a trip to Canna Can Help to learn from the owner Tammy Murray. She talked about how she conducts her business within strict federal guidelines while creating forming important business relationships with local organizations to maintain and promote a more positive community perception of the industry. Tammy is making strides to change the negative stigma of Medicinal Marijuana in the community by maintaining strict practices in regard to regulations that come with owning and operating a dispensary. They also work to maintain close ties with organizations like the Visalia Chamber of Commerce and Senator Feinstein in order to shed light on

Thank you to our speakers Nancy Lockwood, Tammy Murray and Tim Lewis for the incredible respect and generosity you showed to our class while touring your facilities. I urge everyone reading, to keep your eyes open and to maintain an open mind next time you are walking down Main Street or wherever you find yourself. Aspects of the community are always changing and hopefully it's for the better, but it does not change the fact that everyone has something to offer the community and without the support from the community, responsible organizations would cease to exist, food for thought.

## Provost & Pritchard Honored With Two 2019 Engineering Excellence Awards From California ACEC



The American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) has selected two Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group's projects to receive merit awards in their California 2019 Engineering Excellence Award competition. Projects selected were the City of Fresno's Fulton Street Reconstruction project, and Calgren Dairy Fuels LLC's Pixley dairy digester cluster project. The awards will be presented to the firm at the Engineering Excellence Awards Banquet, Feb. 7, 2019.

According to ACEC California, the Engineering Excellence Awards competition has become an effective tool for engineering and surveying recognition for projects that benefit local communities and California as a whole.

"We are honored to be recognized by ACEC California with an Engineering Excellence Award for the fifth year in a row," said Ronald Samuelian, president of Provost & Pritchard. "Our staff work diligently to provide our clients with innovative projects that meet their specific needs, and we are proud of how the two ACEC California Merit Award projects recognized this year demonstrate that innovation."

Created in 1965 by converting 12 adjacent blocks in downtown Fresno to a pedestrian mall with an urban park setting, the Fulton Mall had become outdated and the City was looking for ways improve economic activity. The project reintroduced a pedestrian-friendly commercial streetscape together with a narrow two-lane street with on-street parking. It also restored and relocated all of the significant public art and water features that made the corridor a virtual outdoor art museum. The merit award from ACEC follows up awards previously won by the project, including awards from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and American Public Works Association (APWA).

The Calgren cluster project includes constructing digesters at dairies near the Calgren ethanol plant located in Pixley, California, and pipelines to transport the biogas produced by the digesters to the Calgren plant. Currently, Phase 1 and 2 of the pipeline project have been designed and constructed with the first digester going on-line in August 2018. Up to four more dairy digesters are being connected to this pipeline system. The Phase 3 of the pipeline project has been designed and is under construction to add four more dairy digesters to the existing pipeline system. Phase 4 of the pipeline project has been designed and will be constructed after Phase 3 is complete, adding another four dairies to the existing pipeline system. Excess capacity has been designed into the piping network to accommodate additional dairies located in the area.

Established in 1968, Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group has a strong tradition of engineering and consulting excellence throughout California. With office locations in Fresno, Clovis, Visalia, Bakersfield, Modesto, Los Banos, Chico, Merced and Sacramento, the firm features a mix of seasoned professionals, complemented by younger staff with fresh ideas. Provost & Pritchard specializes in civil and agricultural engineering, environmental and land use planning, hydrogeology and geology, surveying, and construction management services in the areas of water resources, municipal infrastructure, agriculture, site development, and environmental compliance. For more information, visit [www.ppeng.com](http://www.ppeng.com) or email [info@ppeng.com](mailto:info@ppeng.com).



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AT THE VISALIA CONVENTION CENTER

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CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Visalia City Council Meeting City Hall, 7:00pm	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 Chamber Member Orientation Workshop 9:00 am, Fresno Pacific University (Visalia)	14	15	16
17	18 Visalia City Council Meeting City Hall, 7:00pm	19	20	21 YPN Mixer 5:30 pm Train Like a Girl Gym	22	23
24	25	26 Business After Hours Mixer 5:30 pm Visalia Rawhide	27	28 Chamber Ambassador Breakfast 8:00 am, Visalia First Assembly		

Continued from Page 1

- **Greece: In the Footsteps of Paul the Apostle:**  
October 2 – 12, 2019
- **Discover Croatia**  
April 23-May 4, 2019
- **Oberammergau, Germany & Austria**  
June 9-17, 2020

Collette Vacations,  
Mayflower Tours, Cistline

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



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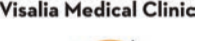
VISIONARY:



REGIONAL LEADERS:



KEYSTONE:



CORNERSTONE:

CIGNA, CSET, E.D.I.S.,  
Lamp Liter Inn,  
M. Green and Company, Naked Nut  
Southern California Edison

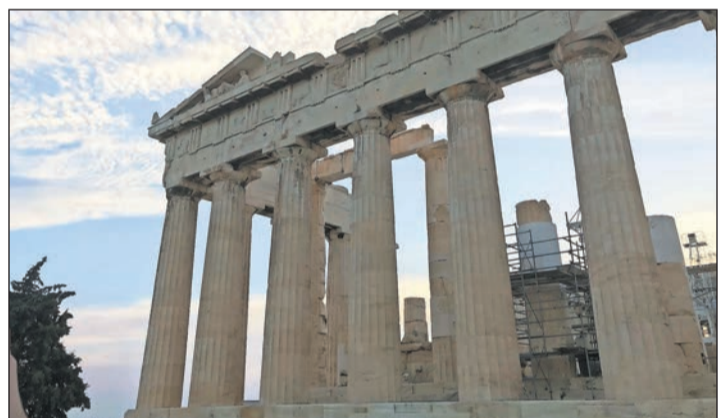
MEDIA PARTNERS:



# A Chamber Employee's Experience on... Greece: In the Footsteps of Paul the Apostle

Besides working with all of the amazing people that travel with us, one of the perks of the Chamber's Travel Coordinator's job is to try out some of the trips we offer. It's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it! Dante Rosh recently was fortunate enough to experience Collette's Familiarization Tour for Greece: In the Footsteps of Paul the Apostle. Familiarization Tours, or FAM's for short, are slightly condensed versions of trips which allow Travel Coordinators the opportunity to try out a company's trip to learn about the itinerary and to see how the company operates their trips from a traveler's perspective. Here's a summary of her experience.

Greece had been on my bucket list for a while, so when the opportunity came to travel with Collette on their Greece FAM, I jumped on it. I was especially interested in the connection to Paul



the Apostle, and to be able to retrace his steps. One of the best parts about traveling with the Chamber, is the fact that it requires so little work from the traveler. The Chamber and the trip operator handle all of the details, so I could just focus on having fun.

We started our adventure in Athens where we arrived just in time to freshen up before heading out to dinner. Our welcome dinner was delicious, traditional Greek cuisine and the Greek entertainment created the perfect atmosphere to get to know the other travelers in our group. The next morning we boarded a small cruise ship, where we cruised the Greek Islands and Turkey. It was a whirlwind of a trip as we stopped at two ports a day, but it gave you just enough time to get a taste of what the islands have to offer, and was really a way to get you to Ephesus, a significant site when following in Paul's footsteps. Stops included Mykonos, Kusadasi (Turkey), Patmos, Crete and Santorini. Some of the sites we saw were: the ruins in Ephesus (where Paul spent three years during his ministry and where its inhabitants were the recipients of Paul's famous Epistle), the House of Mary (where she is said to have spent her last days), the Monastery of John and the Cave of the Apocalypse (where John, inspired by God, wrote the Book of Revelation during his exile), Knossos (a 4,000 BC Minoan civilization - this is an optional excursion), and Oia Village (a picturesque town in Santorini).

After we disembarked from the ship, we traveled to Meteora, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which consists of dark, sandstone pinnacles that rise abruptly from the plain and have six monasteries

perched on top. This was one of the most surprising and breathtaking parts of the trip for me, as I had never seen anything like it and the views from the monasteries were out of this world. After an overnight in Kalambaka, we traveled to Delphi.

You can't travel to Greece without learning about the history of Greek mythology and the significance it had on the country. In Delphi we saw the Doric Temple, the Sanctuary of Apollo, and we had a guided tour of the Archaeological Museum and learned about the role Greek mythology had on Greece and its people.

Our next stop was Corinth, where Paul wrote two Epistles, lived and preached for two years. We saw Agora, where Paul's trial by Gallio took place and the Bema, where Paul was brought before the tribunal. To be able to walk on the ruins of the site where Paul walked and where he wrote to the Corinthians, was truly a humbling experience. The historical and religious significance of his time there was apparent through the stories and history we learned while on the site.

Our last and final stop was back to Athens where we saw Mars Hill, the site where Paul delivered his famous "Men of Athens" speech and we visited the Acropolis. The construction of and view from the top of the Acropolis is nothing short of incredible and to feel the dichotomy between Paul's works there and the massive structures built and dedicated to Greek gods was a unique experiences to say the least. We then headed to our farewell dinner where we exchanged fun stories from the trip, exchanged contact information and said goodbye to new friends.



Collette knows how to treat their travelers. Every detail was planned and organized, from our amazing Tour Manager, to our delicious meals (20 meals are included on this trip!), to our bus driver and our local guides, I can continue to sell Collette trips to my travelers with the utmost confidence.

Click the button below to view the brochure for the full itinerary, departing October 2, 2019. Attend a slideshow to learn more about the trip, how to sign up and to receive a discount either on January 9 or March 14 (see details below).

## Reaching the top is no accident

It takes hard work, and planning, and a little direction from someone who knows the way. Don't fail to plan. Plan to succeed.



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