



Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **DECEMBER 6:**
39th Annual Christmas Tree Auction
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Visalia Convention Center
- **DECEMBER 12:**
YPN Monthly Meet Up
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: BarrelHouse Brewing Co.



VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- **The Azores: Jewels of Portugal**
August 21–30, 2020
- **Splendor of the Seine River Cruise**
September 2–12, 2020
- **Bluegrass Country & the Smoky Mountains**
September 17–25, 2020
- **Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta**
October 9-14, 2020
- **Israel: A Journey of Faith**
November 2-10, 2020
- **Thanksgiving in New York City**
November 23–27, 2020

Collette Vacations, Mayflower Tours, CstlInc
For more information, go to www.visaliachamber.org/travel

Self-Help Enterprises' The Lofts at Ft. Visalia plans to bring together history, art and housing

By John Lindt,
Sierra2theSea Service

A first of its kind mixed use project is being proposed on the site of the first structure in Visalia's history.

Self-Help Enterprises (SHE) has won the bidding to buy the Fort Visalia block, 300 E. Oak Avenue in downtown Visalia, from the City of Visalia. The 60 by 60-square foot fort was the first settlement in Visalia built in the fall of 1852. The fort, with its 14-foot high walls, was used by the area's first European settlers until it was abandoned and torn down by 1855. It was home to many historical figures including Nathaniel Vise, whom the city was named after, Nathan Baker, the city's first general store merchant, and Ruben and Osee Matthews, whose grist mill was the first to provide wheat and flour to the area. Mill Creek and Visalia's first road, Mill Road (now known as



A plaque at the corner of Oak Avenue and Garden Street commemorates the location of the first structure ever built in Visalia, and in most of the Valley. Fort Visalia stood from 1852-1855.

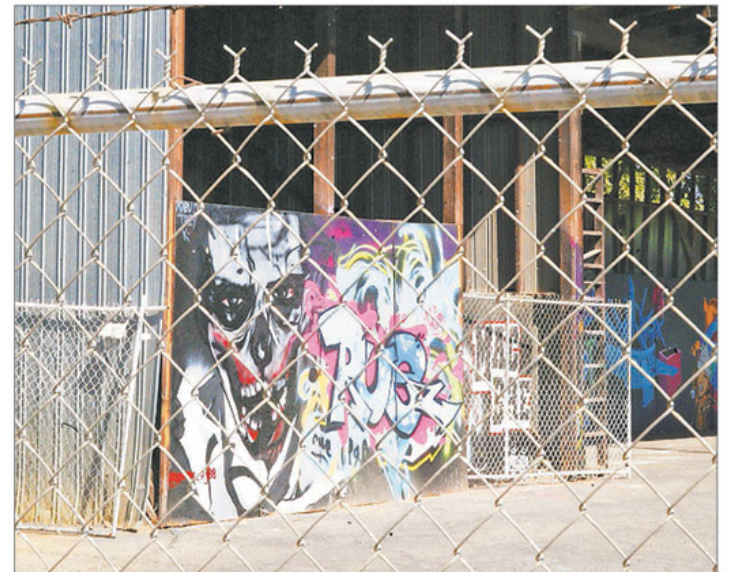
Main Street), were both named after the Matthews Brothers Grist Mill. In more modern history, the block was home to the former Copeland lumberyard. In recent years it has been used by the Arts Consortium to stage local art activities.

After several bids for the property, in a compromise move both the Arts Consortium and low-income home builder Self-Help Enterprises will co-use parts of the 2-acre block with a plan to build three 3-story buildings as part of an architecturally designed mixed-use development known as The Lofts at Fort Visalia.

Self-Help Enterprises CEO Tom Collshaw says the nonprofit builder will carry out its long history of offering affordable housing, not just in rural parts of the Valley but in urban areas as well along with construction of an estimated seven artist lofts featuring rollup door working spaces on the ground floor connected to second story residential units. The project is being designed with 81 units. The artist units built in a row - would face a proposed plaza allowing art events to be staged there along Oak Street, home of not just the Consortium but Arts Visalia gallery and the dance studio. Space for a large, 3,500-square foot art gallery will also be built on the site.

"What's new about this project is the intentional inclusion of the arts," Collshaw said. "This is part of what's becoming known as the arts district in Visalia."

The Visalia Arts Consortium has already given its support to the project. In a May 21 letter to Collshaw, the Arts Consortium's board of directors stated that they have occupied the lot for several years and were looking forward to partnering with SHE to continue its existing



Reggie Ellis/The Sun-Gazette

For the last few years, the 2 acre block where the fort once stood has been used as a home for the Arts Consortium and various art projects and events. The consortium is in support of Self-Help Enterprises' plans to develop a housing project with apartments above ground-level art lofts and gallery space.

art training, gallery shows and community services as well as pursue an Arts District designation with the city for this area.

"This partnership will benefit your organization in that our constant labor will increase the quality of life for your residents who will have the opportunity to participate in our art sessions, take part in activities that we put on in collaboration with our downtown community, and they will be able to interact in positive ways with the numerous Tulare County residents and visitors who regularly attend our events," the letter stated.

To add even more to excitement, the complex will likely feature a Fort Visalia model as well with perhaps space for displays telling something about Visalia's early days.

Collshaw says like many of their projects that Self Help builds they are making the commitment anticipating funding in the next year or so. The development is not likely to break ground until early 2020.

Collshaw says an award-winning Sacramento architectural firm will design The Lofts that will likely mean 100 to 200 new residents just a block from Main St. The square block project fronts on Oak Avenue on the south, School Avenue to the north, Garden Street to the west and Bridge Street to the east. The city bought the property in 2010 with something like this in mind.

The mixed-use development is a minute walking from significant new development in Downtown including the new Darling Hotel and its rooftop restaurant, well known Oak Street restaurants, East Main brew pubs and scores of Main Street eateries. It will be just 2 blocks from the convention center.

The design plan was the subject of a city site-plan review meeting recently.

John Lindt is the publisher of Sierra2theSea.net, an online newspaper covering California's Central Valley and Central Coast. This article was originally printed in the Oct. 9, 2019 edition of The Sun-Gazette.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Breaking the 'I'm busy' addiction

I'm worried about us. I truly mean the collective we. There's a growing issue and I'm not sure we're really tackling the problem let alone acknowledging it.

Our lives have become insanely busy. It's rare, extremely rare, that I don't meet or speak to someone that doesn't reference being busy, a to-do list that doesn't stop or being slightly, okay, completely overwhelmed. Every industry thinks they're the busiest. Be it health care professionals, nonprofit executives or small business owners, everyone thinks what they're doing makes them busiest. Heck, most retired folks tell me they're busier in retirement than when they were working!

Being busy has become the most fashionable thing going. As if being busy makes you somehow more valuable, important or successful. I've watched folks compare schedules, to-do lists as if to one-up each other. Each trying to communicate that their busyness is somehow the measuring stick to greatness. If I'm honest, and I promised a long time ago to be in these messages, I've found myself in that same trap.

I have an amazing mentor and friend, Norris McElroy who has heard me bellyache/low-key brag about my busy schedule and jammed-packed to-do list. But Norris was quick to point out the errors of my ways.

"That's not sustainable, kid. There's a season for that but it shouldn't be a regular thing." Poor Norris caught me on a bad day. Instead of hearing the lesson in his words, I fired back. "Oh, okay then, how do I fix it?" Norris pushed me to see what was important, in business, in life and for me. He nudged me to be honest about my time and my to-dos. He asked me to step back and honestly evaluate what would make me a better CEO, strengthen the Chamber, and, he stressed this, was the best for my family. As he said, "you only get one of those".



Gail Zurek
Visalia Chamber
President & CEO

The reality is this advice has been given to me more times than I'd like to admit. My parents have each given me this advice in their own ways, but like most advice from parents, you realize its value long after it was given. Dave Kilby with the California Chamber gives this advice to new CEOs. Wise people keep reminding me to seek value not busyness.

I've watched others struggle with this busyness addiction filling their schedules to the max, bragging about to-dos and all the while heading towards a place that isn't as fashionable as we all make it sound. At the Chamber, we talk about the value of chamber membership, even if you're too busy to ever come to anything. The fact is your chamber membership is one of the most valuable resources you can have as a business. The Chamber works for you, your business, and this community even if you never RSVP for an event, workshop or ribbon cutting. When we share this with busy business owners, they sigh, smile, and are glad we understand. We do. I run the chamber and I'm a recovering busyness addict.

So, what do you do in this season of peace and reflection if you find yourself busier than ever? My mentor gave me sound advice. Three columns - need to do, want to do, and must do. Norris challenged me to remove my ego from the process. As he explained, we all think our "must list" is much longer than what it really is. Examine your must-dos and need-to-dos as opportunities to develop staff, interns or volunteers. As he explains leaders forget there is an opportunity to train, develop and help others. Your need-to-do list might just be the very thing that helps develop the next great leader.

As for me, I am working and reworking on those three columns trying to be the most effective, focusing on the value and working to break my addiction to the busy.

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

CITY UPDATE

Celebrate the holidays, make memories



'Tis the season for holiday music in the air and making memories with family and friends. If you or your organization is looking for a unique team building experience or holiday celebration, consider heading downtown to Ice Skate Visalia.

Presented by the Visalia Parks & Recreation Department, Ice Skate Visalia is the Central Valley's premier outdoor skating rink. Drawing visitors from throughout the Valley, Ice Skate Visalia is perfect for the young (and young at heart), with skate times, special events, and the opportunity for private rentals.

Garden Street Plaza will once again be transformed into a winter wonderland, with a synthetic rink, as Ice Skate Visalia will hold its Grand Opening on Saturday, December 7th from 2 to 9 p.m. The rink is then be open weekends through December 22nd for public skating and is available for private holiday rentals.

Monday, December 23rd through Sunday, January 12th Ice Skate Visalia will be open every day including Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Public skate admission is \$10 per person and includes skate rental. However, there is no charge for spectators to come out and watch the fun.

For more information on special events or booking your private party with Ice Skate Visalia, contact the Visalia Parks & Recreation Department at (559) 713-4365, email recreation@visalia.city or visit www.iceskatevisalia.com.

With a bright holiday season ahead, the City of Visalia wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season. The future is bright for our City and 2020 holds promise for continued prosperity. We look forward to sharing continued updates, latest news and City business in the New Year.

To learn more about the City of Visalia, sign-up for the weekly "Inside City Hall" newsletter, and find the latest news and events, visit www.visalia.city or connect on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @CityofVisalia.

About this publication ...

Business Update is the official monthly publication of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, 222 N. Garden St., Ste. 300, Visalia, CA 93291, (559) 734-5876. Periodicals, Postage Paid at Visalia, CA 93277; Publication No. USPS 494-060. Annual Subscription rate \$15. Postmaster: Send address changes to **Visalia Chamber of Commerce**, 222 N. Garden St., Ste. 300, Visalia, CA 93291. Advertising information, call the Visalia Times-Delta at 559.735.3235. Editor: Gail Zurek. Layout: Times-Delta Media Group.

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I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER CHAMBER MEMBERS DISCOUNTS; HOW DO I DO THAT?

Member-to-Member discounts is just one of the many perks of being part of the Chamber community! Not only do you have access to promos only available to members, you are able to share yours with our network of over 600 businesses!

Have more questions on how to leverage your membership benefits? Contact Jena today!

Visalia Chamber of Commerce, 222 North Garden St., Suite 300, Visalia, CA 93291. 559-734-5876. info@visaliachamber.org

GROUNDBREAKING • GRAND OPENING • RIBBON CUTTING • CEREMONIES



Ribbon Cutting

Park Visalia Assisted Living

Contact Information | (559) 625-3388



Ribbon Cutting

Central California Blood Center

2245 W Caldwell Ave | (559) 302-1300



Ribbon Cutting

Lux Dermatology

1337 S Lovers Ln | (559) 627-9901

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.

Community Investor Member:

- Bliss Events Group

Small Business Members:

- Chicago's Pizza With-A-Twist
- The Academies CMO (DBA Sycamore Valley Academy DBA Blue Oak Academy)
- Tahiti Pools Inc.

Renewing

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

Community Investor Member:

- Butler Manufacturing Company*

Business Connector Members:

- Cline's Business Equipment Inc.
- Just Between Friends Visalia/Fresno

Small Business Members:

- Beazer Homes*
- Beneficial State Bank

Small Business Nonprofit Members:

- Executives Association of Tulare County*

*Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber 110% Club.

HEALTHCARE NOTE

Kaweah Delta negotiates new Urgent Care billing arrangement with Anthem Blue Cross



Taking a cue from the community, Kaweah Delta has negotiated a new arrangement with Anthem Blue Cross that will alleviate the majority of billing frustrations people experienced after visiting its Urgent Care Centers.

Effective Nov. 1, under this new arrangement, people who have Anthem Blue Cross through independent policies or through employers such as school districts, cities, the County of Tulare, among others, can visit Kaweah Delta Urgent Care Centers, expect to pay their typical co-pay amount (for an urgent care visit), and receive a bill that is reflective of being seen at any freestanding urgent care center.

"We heard our community's frustration with this contract loud and clear. We listened and have come up with a solution that we know those covered by Anthem Blue Cross will be happy with, especially as we enter cold and flu season," said Gary Herbst, Chief Executive Officer of Kaweah Delta.

Previously, Anthem Blue Cross treated Kaweah Delta Urgent Care Centers on Court Street and at Demaree and Flagstaff as if they were an extension of Kaweah Delta's Emergency Department, rather than as urgent care centers. This left patients of Anthem Blue Cross with bills that were reflective of having received emergency care rather than urgent care services.

The Kaweah Delta clinics and urgent care centers (other than Kaweah Delta Medical Foundation) do operate on the Hospital's license and, as such, they are subject to higher standards of construction, are required to be staffed differently, and are surveyed and certified by The Joint Commission, an

accrediting body for healthcare organizations. As such, they cost a lot more to build and operate than independent, freestanding clinics and urgent care centers. "While this new arrangement with Anthem Blue Cross will reduce our urgent care center revenue, Kaweah Delta is committed to making healthcare affordable and available to all patients, so this was the right decision to make," Herbst said.

Kaweah Delta Urgent Care Centers are open seven-days-a-week to care for patients when their doctor is unavailable. Care is available for everything from cold/flu to broken bones, cuts, burns and more. Kaweah Delta Urgent Care Centers offer labs and radiology services, but do not offer ultrasonography (US), computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or positron emission tomography (PET). Patients can also check wait times online at www.kaweahdelta.org and get in line, online, to avoid sitting in the waiting room.

Kaweah Delta Urgent Care
1633 S. Court St.

Open: Daily, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Kaweah Delta Urgent Care
3600 W. Flagstaff Ave.

Open: Daily, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Flu shots are available at Kaweah Delta Urgent Care in Visalia for patients 3 years and older. Cost: \$30. When people experience cold and flu symptoms, Kaweah Delta urges the public to seek care from their personal physicians for conditions that are not life-threatening or will not require hospitalization. When that is not possible or the condition is urgent, but not life-threatening, people are urged to visit an urgent care facility or a walk-in clinic instead of the emergency department. The following conditions/injuries (not an exhaustive list) can

be treated at Kaweah Delta Urgent Care, Sequoia Prompt Care, or Visalia Medical Clinic's QuickCare:

- Fever or flu symptoms (cold, sore throat, cough)
- Sprains, broken bones, fractures
- Mild asthma/breathing difficulties
- Abdominal pain
- Cuts (minimal blood, stitches or staples)
- Ear infections
- Vomiting, diarrhea or dehydration
- Animal bites
- Urinary tract infections
- Bronchitis
- Burns or chemical exposure
- Infected wounds

The following conditions/injuries should be treated at Kaweah Delta's Emergency Department:

- Heart attacks/strokes
- Uncontrollable severe bleeding
- Sudden or severe pain
- Coughing blood or vomiting blood
- Severe breathing difficulties
- Sudden dizziness, weakness or vision changes
- Severe vomiting or diarrhea
- Changes in mental status/confusion
- Open bone fractures

If you are experiencing any of these conditions, please call 911 immediately.

Kaweah Delta is a publicly-owned community healthcare organization that provides comprehensive health services to the greater Visalia region and Tulare County. With more than 5,000 dedicated medical professionals and employees, Kaweah Delta is committed to meeting the community's health needs through state-of-the-art medicine, high-quality preventive services and specialized health centers and clinics. For more information, visit kaweahdelta.org.



Visalia Parks & Recreation Department completed their 11th Annual Corporate Games competition.

Seventeen businesses including the following members: 4Creeks, Inc, California Water Service Company, City of Visalia, CSET, Kaweah Container, Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Self-Help Enterprises, The Equity Group, Tulare County District Attorney's Office, Tulare County Office of Education, Visalia Unified School District, and Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County participated in the two-week long competition to win the prestigious Visalia Corporate Games Cup!

Congratulations to Leadership Alumnus, Jake Sorensen of the Visalia Police Department! He was recently promoted from Detective to Agent within the Violent Crimes Unit.

Central Valley Community Bancorp reported an unaudited consolidated net income of \$16,994,000, and fully diluted earnings per common share of \$1.25 for the nine months ending September 30, 2019, an increase compared



to last year.

Just Between Friends Visalia/Fresno recently completed their Fall Sale for the 16th Year! This year, they partnered with Bethlehem Center as their Charity Partner who received donations from consigners at the end of the event. Their Winter



Sale is planned for December 1 – 7. More information can be found at jbsale.com.

The Sequoia Symphony celebrates its 60th year this year and kicked off its classic concerts in November. To encourage first-time attendees, the symphony is offering a limited number of tickets to every concert for only \$1, the cost of tickets 60 years ago! These legacy tickets are first-come, first-serve and can only be purchased in person.

Sierra Bancorp, parent of Bank of the Sierra, announced that its Board of Directors had declared a regular quarterly cash dividend of \$0.19 per share, a 19% increase paid last year. In addition, they reported a 27% increase of their consolidated net income at \$8.952 million for the third quarter of 2019.

Congratulations to Family Healthcare Network (FHCN) who was recognized by the Health Resources Services

Administration for its achievement in overall quality, efficiency, and the value of the health care services offered. This year, FHCN was recognized as Health Center Quality Leader, Access Enhancer, Health Disparities Reducer, Advancing HIT for Quality, and Patient Centered Health Home Recognition.



Fresno Yosemite International Airport, recently announced a new nonstop service to Leon, Mexico.

Park Visalia hosted a free Veterans Day pancake breakfast. Veterans received a complimentary breakfast as a "thank you" for their service.

Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group announced two new employees to their team. Jared Olsen, an Associated Planner, will join the firm's Visalia office and Morgan Wright will join the Fresno team as an Assistant Planner. Congratulations!

Congratulations to Kaweah Brewing Co. on their expansion! They recently announced a new taproom and restaurant opening soon in the Lowes shopping center in Visalia.

Self-Help Enterprises was one among 62 nonprofits to receive a portion of \$9 million from Wells Fargo Foundation to address housing.

THE LAW AT WORK

Employment Arbitration Agreements Come Under Fire



Brett T. Abbott
Gubler & Abbott LLP

If given the choice between an expedited, confidential arbitration or a protracted, public jury trial, most employers would choose the former. As such, it's a common practice among California employers to require employees to sign arbitration agreements requiring employment disputes to be decided through arbitration as opposed to the civil court system. However, a law recently enacted by Governor Newsom has made a direct challenge toward these agreements.

AB 51 makes it unlawful for an employer to require employees to agree to arbitrate most employment disputes (i.e. those alleging violations of the Fair Employment and Housing Act and/or the Labor Code). Even agreements that allow employees an opportunity to opt-out of an arbitration agreement are now invalid. The bill is very similar to last year's AB 3080, which the legislature passed, but was ultimately vetoed by Governor Brown.

The new law applies to "contracts entered into, modified, or extended on or after Jan. 1, 2020." Thus, arbitration agreements entered into prior to Jan. 1, 2020 appear to still be enforceable, but not if they are modified or contractually "extended" after the effective date. Finally, the bill does not apply to negotiated severance agreements or post-dispute settlement agreements.

Employers may still be able to enforce arbitration agreements based upon federal law, specifically the Federal Arbitration Act (FAA). Under the FAA, a state may not pass or enforce laws that interfere with, limit,

or discriminate against arbitration. If states (like California) do pass such laws, the laws are superseded and preempted by the FAA. Thus, if AB 51 is challenged as a violation of the FAA, it is possible that AB 51 will be declared preempted and, thus, rendered unenforceable. This was actually the reason why Governor Brown twice vetoed similar legislation, acknowledging publicly that it would likely not survive a legal challenge.

Of course, there is no guarantee that AB 51 will be challenged or that the challenge will be successful. Thus, in the meantime, California employers should consider the following in dealing with arbitration agreements:

1. Employers without arbitration agreements, or those who may wish to revise their existing agreements, should implement such changes before the new law takes effect on January 1, 2020;

2. Employers should consider amending existing arbitration agreements to clearly state that the agreement is covered and governed solely by the FAA (and state the basis for such jurisdiction in the agreement); and

3. Employers should consider revising the language of arbitration agreements to permit the inclusion of claims with Dept. of Fair Employment and Housing, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, California Labor Commissioner, etc.

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. Chinoweth St., Visalia, CA 93291 (thecalifornialawyers.com).



Kaweah Delta Town Hall series begins on Dec. 12

As Kaweah Delta continues its efforts to better engage with the community, it will hold its first of five town halls on Thursday, Dec. 12, in Visalia. The five town halls will be hosted in the five zones that make up Kaweah Delta Health Care District and each will be hosted by the board member that represents the particular zone.

Members of the public are invited to join Gary Herbst, Kaweah Delta's Chief Executive Officer during the first town hall, which will take place from 6-7 p.m. at 210, 210 W. Center Ave. The town hall will be hosted by David Francis, Kaweah Delta's Zone 4 Board Member.

"The greatest lesson we learned from the 2016 defeat of Measure H was the importance of listening more carefully and more often to our community," said Herbst, who last month hosted Kaweah Delta's first virtual town hall, which is available on Kaweah Delta's Facebook page. "We want to further involve the community to gather feedback, so that we can continually improve in our efforts to meet the healthcare needs of our region. Working with the community has been a phenomenal experience and as a result, we know that no matter the challenge, we will end up with a better solution."

Measure H was the 2016 proposed general obligation bond that would have helped replace a sizeable number of hospital beds located in the older side of Kaweah Delta Medical Center (what is called the "Mineral King Wing"), which does not meet state earthquake standards.

In 2017, Kaweah Delta formed three Community Advisory Committees to gather feedback on three key issues: Community Relations, Healthcare for Today and Tomorrow, and the Hospital of the Future. Today, these committees and other ambassador groups are comprised of approximately 250 people, who meet monthly with Kaweah Delta leaders to provide ideas and feedback regarding Kaweah Delta services.

For more information, on this or other upcoming town halls, visit www.kawahdelta.org/townhall.

Kaweah Delta is a publicly-owned community healthcare organization that provides comprehensive health services to the greater Visalia region and Tulare County. With more than 5,000 dedicated medical professionals and employees, Kaweah Delta is committed to meeting the community's health needs and providing patients with a personal, professional, and compassionate healthcare experience by offering state-of-the-art medicine, high-quality preventive services and specialized health centers and clinics. For more information, visit www.kawahdelta.org

LEADERSHIP VISALIA

LV. Planning and Land Use Day Session

The Leadership Visalia cohort met on Friday November 8, 2019 at the Visalia Convention Center to discuss the topic of the day, Planning and Land Use in the city of Visalia.

The day began with group activity



that required the cohort to think of what factors made a community great. Greg Collins, Planner and Consultant for City of Visalia, addressed the three general plans of Visalia dating from 1964 to the most current plan. Mr. Collins explained that the general plans of Visalia follow the concept of the "Eight C's": Concentric growth, Contiguous, Compact/density, Control, Conservation, Connected, Compatible, and



Core. He also explained that development happens in tiers to ensure equal expansion in all four directions of Visalia when needed due to population growth.

Paul Bernal, Principal Planner for the City of Visalia, presented "Envisioning Visalia's Future Purpose: The 2023 General Plan". This presentation echoed the concept of the "Eight C's" and explained further details that are considered when creating a general plan of development. Mr. Bernal explained that factors, such as: land use, traffic circulation, conservation, noise, safety we crucial when designing the city. Bernal described neighborhoods nodes as potential spaces to place homes and schools in favorable distances to decrease drive time and increase functionality.

The cohort was then given a tour of Visalia downtown "Crawdaddy's Building" to explore the real-world application of a mixed used facility that has combined function of business and residency in the same vertical structure. Students then met with Harvey May, Developer and President at Paloma Development Co., Ted Smalley Executive Director for TCAG, Brian Todd, Tamara Kelly District Manager at California Water Service, and Matt Ainley Principal Engineer at 4 Creeks.

The students concluded the day with an activity to design a city following the planning criteria that they had learned from the presenters.



MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



Name: Michelle Wiebe Andrews
Company: Pacific Treasures & Gourmet
Title: Owner

Provide a brief overview of your business.

A retail specialty shop in Downtown Visalia since 1991. A unique selection of great gifts for everyone including kitchenware and fine cookware, gourmet foods and chocolate, BBQ accessories, barware, candles, bath and body, garden gifts, baby boutique, pet gifts, unique apparel and jewelry and handbags from Brighton.

News to Share? List the latest awards you've received, new products your business has launched, etc. (Pictures welcomed!)

We are proud to be selected by Brighton Collection to be their exclusive retailer in Visalia!

Also, we wanted to welcome all of you to visit us in our new location, 114 EAST Main Street.

Tell us something interesting about your business or product(s).

We want everyone to know that we really specialize in making up custom gift baskets and specialty gift packages with any items that you choose in our store. As always, our gorgeous gift wrapping is our gift to you!

How does your company get involved in the local community?

We donate a lot of merchandise to local fundraisers.

The best part of working for your company is?



Loving my job! I love my wonderful staff and our amazing customers!

How has the Chamber and/or the Ambassador Program helped you and/or your business?

I am so grateful to the Visalia Chamber for helping us so much with our grand re-opening celebration and ribbon cutting at our new location after the



downtown Christmas fire.

Top thing you wish Visalia knew about your business?

That we are the happiest store in town! We want you to have an awesome shopping experience ... from the great music to the relaxing atmosphere, friendly customer service and all of our unique and exclusive inventory. Come in and see us!



5 Holiday Scams to Look Out For

Contributed By Samuel Ingram

As more and more money gets spent in the holiday season, scammers know there is more opportunity to take a bit of holiday cheer from unsuspecting victims. Here are five holiday scams to look out for this year as you shop for your family and loved ones.

Fake Shipping Notifications.

As our shop online becomes greater, the ability for scamming becomes more apparent. Fake shipping notifications target victims by sending a phishing email that asks for either your personal information or money to finish the delivery. Never give your information out after the initial purchase. Also, retailers



will send you a free tracking number and will not ask for additional payment. Shipping costs are almost always paid at checkout. Speaking of shopping online...

Duplicate Websites

There will most definitely be an uptick in the amount of deals and sales around the holiday season. While these emails may look legitimate, they are copied from the original email but will lead to infected websites or carry malware in the message to infect your computer. Make sure to check the website address and the email address to make sure that you know it's legitimate.

Grandparent Scams. Pretending to be grandkids or other family members, scammers will call seniors to try

and convince them that they are in an accident, arrested, or hospitalized. They will request gift cards or money to be wired to another bank. Make sure to check with the family member directly or ask other family members to see if the claims are true. Do not send money via gift cards or wiring money. Scammers want to remain anonymous.

Puppy Scams.

Around the holidays a lot of families think about adding furry companions to the family. How can you resist the cute pictures of puppies? This can lead to heart strings being pulled along with the money in your wallet. A clever way to tell is if you do an image search of the puppy on Google Search to see if the picture is on several websites. If it is, it is probably a scam. A lot of times these scammers will also want to

ship you the pet instead of meeting face to face. Never pay via Western Union or Moneygram. You can also visit the local Valley Oak SPCA! I am sure there are plenty of furry friends who need a home that don't require the puppy to be "shipped" to you.

Letters From Santa. There are a lot of services out there that will write letters from Santa to your children (or you). However, you should be suspect if there are email offering special prices or deals. A lot of these scammers just want your personal information to sell to the highest bidder. Make sure to look up the legitimacy of these companies online.

We hope these 5 tips help you this holiday stay safe and away from the Grinch! From our team at TechCare360, Happy Holidays!

SANTA AT THE VISALIA MALL



PHOTO OPERATING HOURS

MON-FRI: 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM, BREAK: 3:15 PM - 4:00 PM

SAT: 12:00 PM - 7:30 PM, BREAK: 3:15 PM - 4:00 PM

SUN: 12:00 PM - 6:00 PM, BREAK: 2:30 PM - 3:00 PM

THUR (11/28): CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING

MON-SAT (12/14-12/21): 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM, BREAK 1: 1:00 PM - 1:45 PM, BREAK 2: 4:45 PM - 5:30 PM

SUN (12/22): 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM, BREAK 1: 12:00 PM - 12:45 PM, BREAK 2: 3:45 PM - 4:30 PM

MON (12/23): 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM, BREAK 1: 1:00 PM - 1:45 PM, BREAK 2: 4:45 PM - 5:30 PM

TUES (12/24): CHRISTMAS EVE 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM, BREAK: 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

SANTA CARES DAY

Join us for a sensory-friendly experience with Santa!
Sunday December 8th:
 8:00AM - 9:30AM

**UPCOMING HOLIDAY HOURS
 DECEMBER 2ND-13TH**

MON-FRI: 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM
 SAT: 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM
 SUN: 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM

**UPCOMING HOLIDAY HOURS
 DECEMBER 14TH-25TH**

MON-FRI: 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM
 SAT: 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM
 SUN: 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM
 SAT (12/21): 8:00AM - 10:00PM
 SUN (12/22): 9:00AM - 8:00PM
 MON (12/23): 9:00AM - 11:PM
 TUES (12/24): 8:00AM - 6:00PM
 WED (12/25): CLOSED-MERRY CHRISTMAS

For more information on Mall Holiday hour please www.visaliamall.com

5 Ways to Make the Most of Your Charitable Giving This Season

Contributed by Garth Gibson



The holidays are the time of year when the spirit of giving touches us in a variety of ways. Among other things, we tend to step up our contributions to favored charities. Giving back to causes and organizations that have special meaning is probably the main reason for your philanthropic efforts. There's also the added incentive of claiming a deduction on your next tax return, provided that gifts to qualified charities are made by December 31.

Additionally, nonprofits are counting on generosity from people at this time of year. This is the season when they tend to collect a significant percentage of the total contributions they're able to attract over the course of the year.

As you consider the wide range of opportunities you have to give back, here are five suggestions on how to make the most of your charitable intentions:

1. Give where your money has the most impact

You want to know that the charity

you are benefiting puts the money to good use. All nonprofit organizations will have a certain amount of overhead costs. How confident do you feel about how the organization spends the money it raises? And how can you find out what charities spend on expenses like administration and fundraising? Many charities may spell it out directly on their website or in an annual report. Researching this can help you determine if a nonprofit is garnering the maximum impact from your generosity.

2. Consider charities that are familiar to you

You may have already established a pattern of giving to certain causes. The objectives of these organizations can be closely aligned to issues that are personal to you. If you are familiar with the work of the organization and its accomplishments, you are likely to feel more confident that your contributions are serving a worthwhile purpose. Still, be certain that you truly understand how effectively the organization is meeting its goals. It is easy to give to the same nonprofits out of habit without thinking twice. Conduct your own due diligence and ask questions of representatives of the organization in advance.

3. Do your own soul-searching about who deserves your money

Consider your own views on what problems are important to solve in your community, your state, the country or the world. Charitable contributions can be most fulfilling if your money is going to help resolve real challenges that you believe need to be addressed. Assess where your own passions lie and make a commitment to organizations that effectively address those issues.

4. Think outside of the box

In the world of nonprofit organizations, it is often a case of the rich getting richer, whether it is a heavily endowed university foundation or a well-established organization that focuses on battling a specific medical condition. These may be good causes, but it is also worth exploring other options for your money. Most nonprofits are challenged by a lack of funding. As you set money aside for charities, consider some that have a solid track record but may not be as visible.

5. Dedicate your time

Most nonprofits are likely to tell you that money is the most important gift they can receive, because it is what allows them to pursue their objectives. At the same time, many charities, particularly at the local level, can make good use of your skills and time. Consider setting aside a portion of

each week or month to perform service work for worthy organizations.

The holidays may seem to be the most appropriate time to give, but it's important to think about the value of extending your generosity throughout the year. If you have identified quality organizations that are worthy of regular donations or your volunteer hours, consider giving on a regular basis. It can help charities better manage their own cash flow and volunteer needs, and that can ultimately result in a better return on your own charitable investment.

Garth Gibson, CFP®, CRPC® is a Financial Advisor and Franchise Owner with Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. in Visalia, CA. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for ten years. To contact him, garth.gipson@ampf.com or 559-471-0970.

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Homelessness is a problem but the homeless are not

Contributed by Merritt Wiseman
Action Group Visalia

A grouping of weathered tents lining a sidewalk along our jogging route. A shopping cart piled high with seemingly useless junk in front of our business. A mumbled request for spare change outside Starbucks. They provoke uncomfortable feelings in each of us, and we quickly form our opinions as to what the problems are and how to solve them. For so many reasons, not the least of which is our innate sense of compassion, we all just want the problem of homelessness to go away.

Were there only a simple solution.

Homelessness is a problem but the homeless are not. They are people with problems, and housing them is only part of the solution.

Action Group Visalia is a group of 19 community-minded individuals each of whom brings a unique perspective and skill set to addressing homelessness in Visalia and the surrounding area. We operate under the Visalia Chamber's "Vision Visalia" 501c3 and have the public support of the Visalia City Council. Action Group Visalia's goal is to educate itself about our community's homelessness, to evaluate the approaches which would work best for Visalia, and to create the foundation upon which the City and private organizations can build workable and lasting solutions to chronic homelessness and its effects in our area.

To educate ourselves and our neighbors, we started a "Lunch and Learn" series. Our first speaker, Sgt Brent Miller of the Visalia Police Department's HOPE team is, perhaps, the one community member to have had the most contact with Visalia's homeless population. Through his first-hand accounts of the HOPE team's day to day interactions with the homeless, we got a glimpse into the realities of street living and the people who have to exist in that world. His insights into the problems and his thoughts on practical approaches to addressing homelessness were invaluable.

Where Brent Miller educated us as to those who are homeless and what that life entails, Family Services CEO Caitly Meader and Bloom Group realtor Hollis Elliot led a lively discussion about voucher-based rentals and the overall lack of affordable housing in our area. Our Lunch and Learns have become a valuable networking forum for those working on homelessness.

Our next "Lunch and Learn" brought ideas from former local Habitat for Humanity CEO Betsy Murphy. She detailed her ideas regarding opportunities that arise in partnership with faith-based organizations that can provide shelter and services efficiently and cost-effectively. Again, productive discussion followed. Jason LaFalve, a local pastor of Seven Oaks Church,



and Action Group Visalia Exec member did a great job keeping us grounded.

He reminded us, "We must lead with dignity. These are people, not projects."

We look forward to our upcoming "Lunch and Learn" when two of the Tulare County Homeless Task Force's instrumental leaders, Supervisor Amy Shuklan and Mayor Bob Link join us to discuss the recent study detailing the scope of Tulare County's homeless situation and to give their thoughts on the opportunity for government and the private sector to work together in taking action.

Beyond educating ourselves, we are developing a website to act as a clearinghouse for information regarding the activities to address homelessness in our community. We hope that it will also become a place to find resources available from the multiple groups and agencies that provide services to the homeless and others in need.

Jean Vanier once said, "Many people are good at talking about what they are doing, but do little. Others do a lot but don't talk about it; they are the ones who make a community

live."

We, of course, strive to be the latter. The Action Group has been using its resources and contacts to seek properties and funding which might allow for the near term creation of needed low barrier housing. We are also pursuing needed partners in healthcare, mental health services, and addiction services.

Homelessness has become a national, even international, topic; and of late, I have found so much in all that I read which applies to chronic homelessness. Melinda Gates in her book

The Moment of Lift speaks of the delivery system. As a former pharmaceutical rep, I understand the importance of good delivery systems. She makes the point, "Getting tools to people who need them - that is a delivery system. It is crucial, and it is often complex."

The Action Group ultimately wants to form that delivery system that gets the tools necessary to address homelessness to all the groups and individuals who can implement change in our community.

actiongroupvisalia

Reaching the top is no accident

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Happy Holidays

from your Visalia Chamber

CLIP & SAVE

CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall	3	4	5	6 Christmas Tree Auction Preview 2-4:30 p.m., VIP 6 p.m., GA 7 p.m.	7
8	9	10	11	12 YPN Meet Up 5:30 p.m., Barrelhouse Brewing	13	14
15	16 City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	Jan. 1			

THANK YOU TO OUR PREMIER MEMBERS:

CHAMPION:



VISIONARY:



REGIONAL LEADERS:



KEYSTONE:



CORNERSTONE:

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

MEDIA PARTNERS:



VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Gift of an Internship

By Tamara Ravalin, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent



Internships are two-way gifts. The partnership provides a student with the gifts of a meaningful learning experience that demonstrates the relevance of what they are learning in high school, an understanding of what it means to have a job, and help to develop an educational and career plan for the future. This year, we had 165 students participate in the

have needed assistance in a variety of skill areas. The commitment and dedication of our industry partners makes these gifts possible.

Recipients of the 2019 Outstanding Student Internship Award and scholarship, sponsored by California Water Service.

"This past summer, I was afforded the opportunity to take part in an internship at Allen Law Firm. Not only did the wonderful people of the firm welcome me, but they also taught me so much about the field I'm passionate about and hope to make my life's work. In fact, the coaching and training I received was so effective that Mr. Allen asked me to stay on as a paid employee of the firm. I absolutely love my job, and I'm so grateful for the valuable

Visalia, I made more than 600 phone calls and I learned a few tricks along the way, like how certain phrases helped to open doors. I learned how to communicate better and this project forced me to listen and improve my organizational skills." ~Arel Rodriguez, Golden West High School Junior

We are thankful for the support of our industry partners and wish to form additional partnerships. For more information regarding hosting summer interns through Visalia Unified School District, please contact Kim Batty (kbatty@vusd.org) or Theresa Polich (tpolich@vusd.org) in our College and Career Readiness Office (559) 730-7510.



internship program, more than doubling our student participation in three years. Internships also provide our business partners with gifts. Business partners have an opportunity to shape the future of our workforce, recruit potential employees, and

legal and business experience that comes with it, not to mention the personal relationships I've developed." ~Noelle Andrew, Redwood High School Senior "As part of my internship at the City of

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