



# Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **FEB. 11:**  
**GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS MEETING**  
Time: 7 a.m.  
Location: Buckman-Mitchell
- **FEB. 13:**  
**YPN MONTHLY MEET UP**  
Time: 5:30 p.m.  
Location: BarrelHouse Brewing Co.
- **FEB. 27:**  
**AMBASSADOR MONTHLY BREAKFAST**  
Time: 8 a.m.  
Location: Visalia First
- **FEB. 28**  
**IMPACT PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP: FRONTLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING**  
Time: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.  
Location: Wyndham Visalia



- **The Azores-Jewels of Portugal:**  
Aug. 21-30, 2020
- **Bluegrass Country & the Smoky Mountains:**  
Sept. 17-25, 2020
- **Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta:**  
Oct. 9-14, 2020
- **Israel-A Journey of Faith:**  
Nov. 2-10, 2020
- **Thanksgiving in New York City:**  
Nov. 23-27, 2020
- **Culinary Italy/13-Day Tour:**  
April 20-May 3, 2020
- **London & Paris Discovery:**  
Oct. 19-27, 2021

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

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

## There's a new kid in town

Earlier this week your Visalia Chamber had the enormous pleasure of interviewing one of this City's newest transplant, Sam Sigal, the 31-year-old face of First Pitch Entertainment. The Visalia Rawhide's new ownership group met us at Rawhide Recreation Ballpark to share about First Pitch, Sam and their plans for our beloved Champions.

Professional baseball has had a home in Visalia for nearly three-quarters of a century. The minor league team has played under various monikers over the years, depending on their major league affiliations, but lately are known as the Rawhide- an affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks. Their legacy has left an impact, not only on our community but the world of baseball. Kirby Puckett began his career in Visalia; Don Drysdale once owned the team and Visalia's baseball lure shined in the 1998 Kevin Costner hit film Bull Durham. Baseball is a community sport in Visalia.

For anyone who has been gone for the last six months, or living under a rock, the Visalia Rawhide is the current reigning baseball champions of the California League. Their long-fought run to the Championship unified our community. Visalians filed into RecreationRawhide Ball Ppark to break the curse and regain the Championship banner. Visalia hasn't had those bragging rights since 1978.

Given its storied history and community importance, sitting down with First Pitch Entertainment was a priority for your Visalia Chamber Business Update staff.

First Pitch Entertainment, owned by Sam and his parents Elliot and Ruth Sigal, began searching statewide two years ago to acquire a minor league baseball team. Baseball was a secondary reason for their search. Sam had a broadcasting internship with a minor league baseball team that exposed the group to the power of the community. Ruth and Elliot, while visiting Sam, saw something that sometimes even the most dedicated baseball fans can miss, community builds baseball. When searching to acquire a local team, while baseball stats were important, community statistics became the deciding factor as this family team decided where to invest.



While there are plenty of communities that have baseball teams, Visalia became an early standout.

Visalia was the obvious choice, Sam said, because of the overwhelming sense of community he felt during his visits here. In particular, the 4th of July extravaganza hosted at Recreation Park in partnership with the Visalia Rawhide opened Sam's eyes to the potential and value of Visalia. For Sam that 4th was more than just fireworks and hot dogs. That day showcased the best of Visalia. Bringing the community together meant old friends reconnected, neighbors gathered and everyone felt a sense that in Visalia we are

all a part of something bigger.

"I really wanted to be a part of this community." And since making his home here in October of last year, Sam has been doing his best to keep that pledge. Sam has made time to volunteer in the community. He's an active member of the Downtown Visalia Rotary Club and serves on the board of directors for various non-profit and charitable organizations, including Pro-Youth HEART -- an organization very close to his heart that endeavors to empower the community by empowering its young people.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### Push to be extraordinary

*"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least falls while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*  
- President Theodore Roosevelt



**Gail Zurek**  
Visalia Chamber  
President & CEO

tackle goals just within reach and stay in my safe zone. The older I get the more this is the case. Please tell me I'm not alone in this struggle!

But those safe zones lead to routine, stagnation, and apathy. Three things that quickly kill improvement, innovation, and the extraordinary. Good enough is not good enough if we want success beyond where we are now. I know to succeed we have to push past comfortable and typical to do the great.

On March 26th the IMPACT Leadership conference will again push us to think differently, to examine our potential and develop a tangible plan to achieve the extraordinary. Last year's inaugural IMPACT set the bar at new levels. Attendees ranked their satisfaction high. One conference-goer shared that IMPACT was more beneficial than industry-specific conferences their team attends out of state.

Our afternoon keynote speaker, James Llyod, especially will talk about leadership blind spots. Those blind spots develop when we spend too much time in safe zones. Staying in those safe zones with our blind spots prevents our growth and ultimately success. It's an important conversation and one Mr. Llyod does masterfully. He has quite the following and I expect he'll again be met with rave reviews.

If you find yourself and your team in the arena, as President Roosevelt described, this day is for you. IMPACT helps those of us striving to be better to push past safe to lead to bolder and bigger places. Invite your team, those you mentor, those you look up to, to join you on this important day to be in the arena and do the important work that leads to "the triumph of high achievement". Registration for individuals and teams can be purchased at [visaliachamber.org/impact](http://visaliachamber.org/impact)

## VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS



Catalyst for Change



Community Convener



Champion for Business

## AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

**Name:** Jordan Mulrooney  
**Company:** RE/MAX Visalia  
**Title:** Broker Associate

### How has the Chamber and the Ambassador Program helped you or your business to grow?

The chamber and ambassador programs have helped me, and my business grow tremendously. In the short time that I have been involved with the Chamber I have been able to sit at the table with other industry leaders I would have not met otherwise. I have received tremendous exposure from the Chamber and have made many lifelong friends in our community.

### Why is it important to employees to get involved in the Visalia Chamber programs and events?

Getting involved is the key to being successful with the Chamber. You have to be present to be known. I find it very important to go to events, talk with people I have never met before and simply get to know others. You would be surprised the conversations that rise simply at a ribbon cutting or at a YPN monthly mixer.

### The best part of working for your company is?

The best part of working for my company is the level of professionalism. As an industry our county is very professional in my field of work, but RE/MAX takes that to the next level. Between education, ethics, knowledge, brand power, and company culture there is no other company in our area like RE/MAX Visalia.

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

My favorite place to go in Visalia with friends and family is to the Visalia Planing Mill. My twin brother is a manager there and many of the employees are friends of mine and past clients. It has amazing food and such an amazing crowd of people.



## RIBBON CUTTING



**Kaweah Delta Health Care District – Sequoia Health & Wellness Center**  
 202 W Willow Ave, Fifth Floor | (559) 624-2000

## Visalia Chamber Seeks Board Member Nominations

The Visalia Chamber Board Nominating Committee is asking the membership to submit names of individuals that should be considered by the committee to join the Board of Directors, July 1, 2020.

All recommended individuals must be part of a Chamber Member business in good standing. Recommendations will be accepted thru Wednesday, February 28th.

Please send all recommendations to Sue Summers at sue@visalachamber.org with the subject heading “Board of Director Recommendation”

### 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 494-660. 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.**

©Copyright 2009. All rights reserved. Reproduction by any means of the entire contents or any portion of this publication without written permission is prohibited. The appearance of any advertisements in the publication does not constitute support or endorsement for any product, person, cause, business or organization named therein, unless specifically noted otherwise in the advertisement.

## 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.

#### Keystone Member:

- KUUBIX ENERGY INC.

#### Business Builder Member:

- GEIGER PROSTHETICS AND ORTHOTICS, INC.

#### Small Business Members:

- AMERICA'S BEST VALUE INN
- SUMMIT HOMEBUILDERS, INC.

### RENEW

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

#### Regional Leader Member:

- Visalia Rawhide Baseball Club

#### Business Builder Members:

- Figaro's Mexican Grill
- \*Salser & Dillard Funeral Chapel

#### Business Connector Members:

- \*California Business Machines
- \*Carl Nelson Insurance Agency
- \*Doctors Occupational Testing Solutions
- \*JP Electric & Solar

#### Small Business Members:

- \*Barsamian and Moody
- Gubler & Abbott
- \*J & D Lighting & Alarm
- \*Lux Dermatology
- \*Main Street Office Suites/Ouzounian Properties
- \*Oral E. Micham, Inc.
- Principal Financial Group
- \*Valley Expetec

#### Business Connector Members Non-Profit:

- Brandon-Mitchell Gallery Event Center
- \*Jon Stemkoski's Celebrant Singers

#### Small Business Nonprofit Member:

- \*Visalia Players

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

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Although the 2020 season hasn't begun, there is much to do to prepare for another championship season. He isn't looking to replace staff but rather to be the local representation of ownership. Sam walks into management understanding that Champions aren't just on-field players but management, marketing and the tons of local employees that drove the Rawhide to this last year's storied win.

Sam's commitment to our community and his entire team doesn't end there. Everyone from the front office to the concessions is encouraged to volunteer and join a service organization of their choice. Like Sam, many of his employees are recent transplants to Visalia, and they find that becoming involved in this community has been the best way to plant roots and establish Visalia as their home. Sam recognizes having staff engaged in the community has done more than just build staff morale. It's one of the best ways for the Rawhide to connect directly with Visalia.

Understanding that *Rawhide baseball is Visalia and Visalia is Rawhide baseball* is really just getting to the first base of understanding. Community involvement in baseball is so much more. The First Pitch group recently added a 21x40-foot state-of-the-art video board in the left field. The reported \$568,000 purchase was funded through capital improvement funds as outlined in First Pitch's contract with the City of Visalia. This board allows better fan interaction, something Visalia is excited to capitalize on. "Visalia's fans are the best" Sam boasted.



In addition to the fan engagement during games, First Pitch is using the board to give back to Visalia. In March, the Rawhide will begin hosting community Movie Nights at the Ballpark. These family-friendly evenings encourage community members to bring a blanket to sit on, enjoy local Bbarrelhouse tall boys and two for one tacos. These movie nights will add to the growing number of community events held within the Rawhide Stadium Ballpark. Sam plans to continue those important community connections.

Knowing First Pitch Entertainment's interest is in building Visalia through baseball, we, like so many other Visalians, are excited about the next chapter of baseball in Visalia. The 2020 Season begins with a home opener on April 9th. Tickets, sponsorships, and partnership opportunities can be found online or by contacting Jillian Gearin in the front box office: jillian@rawhidebaseball.com, (559)732-4433.



# IMPACT

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

PRE-EVENT WORKSHOP

## FRONTLINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

FEBRUARY 28 TRAINING

10AM- 12PM WYNDHAM VISALIA

FEATURING IMPACT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
 KEYNOTE SPEAKER JAMES LLOYD

WORKSHOP \$25, CONFERENCE COMBO DISCOUNT TICKETS AVAILABLE

PRESENTED BY

Provost & Pritchard announced they added a new professional service to their list of capabilities: biological consulting services and two of their staff who passed the Professional Engineers Exam: Annemarie Fox and Alex Gong. In addition, they were recognized and awarded a Merit Award by the American Council of Engineering Companies of California (ACEC California) for their TCP Mitigation project in Bakersfield. Congratulations!

Eagle Mountain Casino acknowledged seven team members for their extraordinary achievement. Each month, Team Members and Guests nominate Team Members who have gone above and beyond their duties to help others in need. Congratulations to all seven recipients of the Eagle Award of the month!

Quail Park on Cypress will be hosting a Free Drive Thru Shredding Event for Seniors on March 27th; 8am -11am.

The College of the Sequoias were awarded a grant to support the Valley's specialty crop industry by providing affordable food safety training from December to May.

Congratulations to QK! They received a Commendation Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies of California (ACEC California) for their work on the use of drone technology in civil engineering and surveying.

Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) continued its three-decade long tradition of providing its neediest patients with food and gift baskets, and some holiday cheer. Through their Anita Fund, FHCN was able to extend holiday cheer to families in 24 communities and over 300 children. The Anita Fund is funded through the generosity of the FHCN staff.



Pita Kabob announced their plans for 2020, which includes a new PK Deli & Bakery. Congratulations!

Tulare County Association of Realtors swore in their 2020



officers: president Connie Kautz, president-elect Dena Clark, secretary treasurer Janet Jones and directors: Craig Smith, Kohlee Barbeau, Rick Conway, Chris Jolly, Kristina Ross, Richard Carlson, Joseph Nguyen and Matthew Thompson.

Congratulations to The Source LGBT+ Center! They recently received a \$50,000 grant to strengthen their substance abuse programs. The center was one of 55 community-based organizations selected to receive the money, provided by The Center at Sierra Health Foundation through the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Access Points Project. "The Source LGBT+ Center will be able to increase its existing resources to help people living with substance use disorders. The grant was awarded because we have a center in the area that is already doing life-saving work in marginalized communities. And we have a center because of our supporters." Nick Vargas, Founder/Director of Development.

Rauber Johnson & Black recently announced the addition of Kyle J. Johnson as an associate of the firm. Kyle graduated Magna Cum Laude from Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law. The firm will continue to provide legal services in the areas of Trust and Estate Planning, Probate and Trust Administration, Business Planning, Contracts and Real Property Law.



Central California Blood Center partnered with The Pickled Deli's grand opening community event for a blood drive.

On January 19th, the Assistance League of Visalia helped 225 children shop for new clothing at Visalia's JCPenney store as part of the Operation School Bell program. This was the third clothing event of this school year which reached a total of 800 students. In November, they distributed books to 750 PK-5th grade students.

Congratulations to one of our Board of Directors and Community Leader, Garth Gipson of Gateway Financial Planning Group! He was recently appointed to the Kaweah Delta Health Care District Board.

## INCOMING BOARD MEMBERS

# Kaweah Delta votes in new Board Member

Kaweah Delta is excited to share the Board of Directors has filled the open Zone 3 Board seat, which was left open by Dr. John Hipskind's retirement from the Board. The Board unanimously voted to appoint Garth Gipson, a financial planner, who was born in Visalia and raised in the Central Valley, to represent Zone 3 through Dec. 3, 2020 – the remainder of Dr. Hipskind's term.



Gipson

Garth has expressed an interest to file as a candidate in the November 2020 election for the Zone 3 seat. He currently serves on the Visalia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and on the Elder Board at Neighborhood Church in Visalia. He is a graduate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and is a U.S. Naval Officer veteran. He will be sworn in on Jan. 13, and we are very excited to have him on our Board.

## MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



Name: Samantha Welch  
Company: JP Electric & Solar  
Title: Marketing Director

### Provide a brief overview of your business.

JP Electric & Solar is an electrical and solar company based out of Visalia, Ca. The company started as an electrical company in 1978, then brought on the solar in 2009, and has continued to blossom into what it is today over the past 40 plus years.

### News to Share? List the latest awards you've received, new products your business has launched, etc.

JP Electric & Solar is about to open their very own solar design showroom where members of the community can visit the location to see solar panel options, storage options, roof racking and attachments, and meet with the highly trained and professional staff. By visiting the showroom location, people of the community will be able to see what solar would potentially look like on their home or business. JP Electric

& Solar will be running an in house signing promotion as well!

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

With more than 40 years of experience in the industry, you can rest assured that this locally owned company will take the time to ask questions, do research, and make recommendations based on what is in your best interests. As a SunPower® Elite Dealer, they will provide more power with a smaller footprint, ideal for optimizing savings in a restricted space.

### How does your company get involved in the local community?

JP Electric & Solar has always had a huge part in a few local non profit organizations and that always stood out to me. It was one of the reasons I decided to make the move from a corporate organization to JP Electric & Solar. I saw that I would be able to get more involved with the community and work towards helping others.

Currently, we have a Partnership Program that local non profits can be a part of if they are interested. The Partnership Program was created to build awareness in the community and give back at the same time.

Along with getting involved with local non

profits, I also love being a part of the Visalia Chamber and Ambassador program the Visalia Chamber has to offer. Being able to go out and see what the community is doing has truly changed the way I look at our small town. We may be small, but we are mighty.

### The best part of working for your company is?

The best part about working for JP Electric & Solar is being able to do my part in decreasing our carbon footprint by spreading knowledge through marketing.

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

Being involved with the Chamber and the Ambassador Program has opened so many doors for our business. Going to the ribbon cuttings, events, breakfasts, and just stopping into local chamber member's locations has helped increase our connections and drive sales over the past year. We are excited to see what 2020 offers!

### Top thing you wish Visalia knew about your business?

JP Electric & Solar is a one stop shop and they are here for the people in the community.

MY BUSINESS JUST OPENED A SECOND LOCATION. HOW DO I SCHEDULE A RIBBON CUTTING?  
We love to Champion Good News from our Members. Contact me to schedule a ribbon cutting and visit our website to learn how they typically work: visaliachamber.org/ribbon-cutting.

WHAT EVENTS DOES THE CHAMBER HAVE COMING UP?  
Our Impact Leadership Conference is set for March 26th. Early bird tickets are on sale now. But hurry, the sale won't last long! visaliachamber.org/impact

HOW CAN I CONTACT ANOTHER MEMBER?  
Through your Member Portal, you can connect with other members directly!

Have a questions about the Chamber? Send me a message: Jena@visaliachamber.org

## VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Working with the Community to Create Futures



to learn how the District works to meet students' health needs. Over the course of a year, the committee considers the eight components of coordinated school health: nutritional services, physical education, health education, health services, counseling and support services, healthy school environment, promotion of staff health, and family/community involvement. The

**Tamara Ravalin, Ed.D.**  
Interim Superintendent  
Visalia Unified School District

When school districts actively engage with parents and members of the community, they are able to respond more effectively to the needs of its students. These valuable partnerships result in sharing and maximizing knowledge, and they help our schools provide the children of Visalia the best possible educational opportunities.

VUSD seeks this important community involvement through several advisory committees that provide strategic guidance to our organization, and these committees often have need for increased membership and community input. Below are descriptions of a few of our advisory committees. VUSD invites you to become involved with any that may be of interest to you.

### VUSD Coordinated School Health Advisory Committee

This is an opportunity for residents

Skadan at (559) 730-7580 or by email at sskadan@vusd.org.

### VUSD Education Advisory Forum

This gathering is intended to encourage engagement on any topic of interest to attendees, and from time to time, for VUSD staff members to seek input on specific topics of broad interest. Topics that have been discussed in the past include dress code, planning the new high school, and school traffic. The goal of the forum is for District staff to engage with the community in a collaborative setting and work toward a deeper understanding of challenges and successes. The Education

VUSD seeks this important community involvement through several advisory committees that provide strategic guidance to our organization, and these committees often have need for increased membership and community input.

Advisory Forum meets from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month, but does not meet in June, July, August, or December. For more information, contact VUSD Administrator Jim Sullivan, jsullivan@vusd.org, (559) 730-7566.

### VUSD Finance Advisory Committee

This committee is designed to help residents understand the District's finances. The Finance Advisory Committee is more complex than others, but Chief Financial Officer Nathan Hernandez works to explain the process. In addition to reviewing financial audits, the committee reviews the repayment of debt issued through general obligation bonds (such as Measures A and E) and certificates of participation issued by the District to fund building projects. The Finance Advisory Committee meets the first Tuesday of every other month at the VUSD District

Office, 5000 W. Cypress Ave. The next meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3. For more information, contact Chief Financial Officer Nathan Hernandez at (559) 730-7529 or by email at nhernandez@vusd.org.

### VUSD Facilities Advisory Committee

This committee meets periodically to review the status of facilities improvements and repairs, with a special focus on the use of locally-approved bond measures E and A. Any resident of Visalia is welcome to attend, to bring up concerns or questions or to simply understand how priorities are set and decisions made in the ongoing challenge of maintaining 41 school sites. The next committee meeting is set for Thursday, April 23 at 5:30 p.m. at the District Office. For more information, contact Director of Facilities Gerry Lemus at (559) 730-7350 or by email at glemus@vusd.org.

## CITY UPDATE

## Looking Back at 2019, Looking Forward to 2020

2020 is here and we're already seeing a positive year ahead. Take a quick trip with us as we look back at 2019, and get a few sneak peaks at the new year.

Last year, we saw the most new commercial square footage since 2007, with over 1,100,000 square feet in 53 new permits. Larger projects in the Industrial Park included the UPS Central Valley Ground Hub expansion at the northeast corner of Plaza and Riggan and the new industrial park tenant, Millipore Sigma further east on Riggan.

Another solid year for residential growth, 2019

saw us hit 638 single family permits issued (also the most since 2007) and 61 new multifamily units. Surely the news that Visalia has the most affordable homes in the state ([www.HomeArea.com](http://www.HomeArea.com)) will continue to generate more interest in housing development in Visalia, particularly as growth continues across the Central Valley.

Commercial highlights for the year included Mooney Boulevard, where despite regional



closures; Marie Callender's is open, as are businesses like Macys and JCPenney. New tenants are coming soon to the Visalia Mall, there is the recently completed Grove at Packwood South that is already bustling, plus there is a revamp to the Sequoia Mall property coming.

The heart of the city has seen changes, as downtown looks to grow with the new Doc Burnstein's Ice Cream Lab, Corby's Rock and Roll Heroes and more. East downtown

has several concepts proposed, and there are developments across the northern and eastern parts of the City as well.

2019 ended on a high note, and we're carrying that energy into the new year. With just too much to list here, find more on our year-end wrap up at [www.visalia.city](http://www.visalia.city). Here is to 2020 and another great year throughout Visalia.

To stay connected with the City of Visalia, sign-up for the weekly "Inside City Hall" newsletter, visit [www.visalia.city](http://www.visalia.city) or connect on social media @CityofVisalia.

## HEALTHCARE NOTE

## Learning From Our Community



In our last Healthcare Note, we shared that we are listening more carefully to our community. To build on this effort, we recently launched a series of town hall meetings. There are four more of these in 2020; the next takes place from 6-7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 27, at College of the Sequoias. We invite you to attend because your questions and feedback are helping us become a better hospital and more responsive to your healthcare needs.

## Merging Districts

One important opportunity you asked us to explore is the possibility of merging healthcare districts or incorporating nearby communities that do not currently lie within the boundaries of any existing healthcare district, before going to the community to pass a general obligation bond.

Our community asked us to meet with districts after hearing that we commissioned a study to determine what, if any, potential opportunities

might surface from a merger of neighboring districts. We met with Alta Healthcare District, which includes Dinuba and Cutler-Orosi. We talked about potentially merging districts or at least having them pass a general obligation bond where proceeds of that would be used to help Kaweah Delta replace the 221 beds that are located in an area of the hospital that does not meet earthquake standards. Our next meeting with them is set for March 19. We also plan on reaching out to the Exeter Healthcare District because its close proximity to us makes sense.

## Master Plan

We continue to work with RBB Architects, a master facilities planning firm, and KPFF, a nationally renowned structural engineering firm, to determine what Kaweah Delta will look like in the future. A key question is what to do with the Mineral King Wing, the older part of the hospital that does not meet earthquake standards. We will soon begin seismic testing of the building composition (e.g., concrete, steel, etc.) to determine whether it can be brought into

compliance through retrofit or reinforcement. We will know more by summer. Simultaneously, we are working on a legislative extension to push our compliance deadline beyond 2030, along with design options to replace the 221 beds more incrementally and affordably. A legislative extension could allow us to fund the majority of the project ourselves, going only to the community for the last piece of funding. Our "Hospital of the Future" Community Advisory Committee's input is helping us work on solutions.

## Emergency Department

In response to feedback from community members, we now limit the number of visitors a patient can have with them in the Emergency Department (ED). Patients can choose two visitors to accompany them while they are in the ED waiting area and one visitor while they are in the patient care area of the ED. This change is helping ensure that the waiting area can accommodate patients seeking care as we round out construction this year to double the size of our ED and waiting area. In March, we will open nine new beds; we

already added eight new beds last summer, along with a new area where patients seeking ED care are quickly screened by medical providers.

We are always working to improve. Along those lines, a third cardiac surgeon, Dr. Gonzalo Carrizo, who previously worked at the Cleveland Clinic and the Texas Heart Institute, recently joined Dr. Leheb Aralm and Dr. Sergio Caminha in caring for patients at Kaweah Delta. In addition to our affiliation with the Cleveland Clinic's heart program, which has been ranked No. 1 in the nation since 1995, we now have a new affiliation with the University of Southern California. This affiliation allows for USC medical students to rotate through Kaweah Delta. As a result, we hope they will join our residency programs and stay in our community. Lastly, in February, we will be named one of America's 250 Best Hospitals for the second year in a row by Healthgrades, a national firm that ranks hospitals based on 32 different clinical outcomes, including mortality and complication rates.

We welcome your input, questions and feedback, so that we can continue to improve for you in 2020.

## LEADERSHIP VISALIA

## Leadership Visalia explores Visalia's economic development



The Leadership Visalia 2019-2020 cohort enjoyed a day filled with informative presentations relating to the day session's topic of "Economic Development."

The day kicked off with various pie and data charts presented by Nancy Lockwood, Executive Director of Visalia Economic Development Corporation and owner of Lockwood Agency. The various data illustrated Visalia's steady economic and population growth.

Taking a closer look into Visalia's economic growth, Rick Feder, General Manager at Visalia Mall, presented on Visalia's retail and consumer

demand. If the "Retail Apocalypse" is real, then why is approximately ninety percent of retail still done in stores? This question, along with the "Live, Work, Play" concept was discussed during his presentation. Did you know that Visalia's Applebee's Grill & Bar ranked No. 3 in California (93 total) or that our Red Robin ranked No. 4 out of 60 (per a 2017 Sales Ranking Report)? These, along with other facts are used as indicators of a thriving economy.

The cohort was then presented with a panel of four local business owners and/or management each with their own unique experiences and challenges. Some of the challenges that were mentioned were increases in payroll expense and difficulty in employee retention. Most of the panel presenters experience the same challenges, however, they also

experience similar advantages in their respective businesses that come from being located in Visalia, such as the hardworking community.

Did somebody say, "Pizza!?" The cohort was taken on a little field trip/tour of The Planing Mill Artisan Pizzeria. Did you know that The Planing Mill was awarded the 2017 Chamber "Small Business of the Year" award? Hard work and dedication paid off! Owner, Tim Lewis shared his experience in taking that leap in becoming a restaurateur, touching on opportunities and obstacles along the way.

After a delicious lunch, the Cohort regrouped at 4Creeks, Inc, Leadership's host of the day, to continue with a class activity and additional presentations. Marc Mertz with Kaweah Delta Health Care District went over several impressive

data and facts that should make our Visalia community proud of our local medical center. One impressive fact is that Kaweah Delta is among America's 50 best hospitals in cardiac surgery for three years in a row, according to a study by Healthgrades. The session was ended with a very passionate presentation by Jonna Schengel, Dean of Students – Nursing at College of the Sequoias. She went over the various programs offered at the college and touched on the exciting new partnership between Fresno State and COS.

In conclusion, the cohort had a wide variety of presentations that each focused on different aspects of economic development. All presenters did a fantastic job and the cohort walked away with more information on their wonderful community of Visalia!

## THE LAW AT WORK

## 2020 brings new employment laws



One constant in employment law is change. The year 2020 is no exception – a host of new laws have gone into effect in 2020. Some of these new laws have been discussed in prior articles (regulations regarding arbitration agreements and independent contractors, etc.). The purpose of this article is to highlight additional changes to the labor and employment landscape.

AB 749 (No-rehire Provisions in Settlement Agreements): This bill prohibits a settlement agreement entered into on or after January 1, 2020 from containing a provision whereby the settling employee agrees that he/she may not seek re-employment with the employer and is not eligible for rehire. However, a no-rehire provision is allowed if the employer found, in good faith, that the settling employee committed sexual harassment or sexual assault.

SB 142 (Lactation Accommodation): An employer must provide an affected employee with a private space (other than the bathroom) that can be used for lactation. The space must have electricity, a table or other surface to hold equipment, and a place to sit. The employer must also provide a sink and refrigerator or other cooling device (for storing milk) in close proximity to the employee's workspace. An employee's normal workspace may be used if it otherwise complies.

AB 673 (Expanded Labor Code Penalties): This new law amends Labor Code section 210 to allow an employee (and not just the Labor Commissioner) to bring an action to recover statutory penalties for late payment of wages.

AB 1223 (Additional Organ Donation

Leave): California employers already have a legal obligation to provide an employee with up to 30 days of paid leave per year for purposes of organ donation. This new law expands this obligation by requiring employers to provide an additional 30 days of unpaid leave if needed for purposes of organ donation.

SB 778 (Harassment Training): This bill clarifies that employers with 5 or more employees have until



Brett T. Abbott

Gubler & Abbott LLP

January 1, 2021 to provide two hours of training to supervisors and one hour of training to non-supervisory employees.

If an employer provides the training in 2019, it is not required to provide it again until two years later.

SB 188 (Racial Hairstyles): This bill expands/clarifies race discrimination under California law to include discrimination against a person because of historical traits with race, including hair texture

and protective hairstyles, such as locks, braids, and twists.

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. Chinoweth St., Visalia, CA 93291 ([www.thecalifornialawyers.com](http://www.thecalifornialawyers.com)).



**Reaching the top is no accident**

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

Call us. 559.739.1747 • [DMIAGENCY.COM](http://DMIAGENCY.COM)

MARKETING LOGOS WEBSITES CAMPAIGNS GRAPHIC DESIGN SOCIAL MEDIA

## Candidate Kuyler Crocker

**Candidate Name:**  
**Kuyler Crocker**  
**Candidate for Tulare County**  
**Supervisor District 1**



Crocker

Flat, being the only elected official involved with the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley, requesting funds to fix the Friant Kern Canal, and SGMA implementation.

**Contact Information:**  
 Website/Social Media:  
 crockerforsupervisor.com/  
 Crocker for Supervisor - Facebook  
 Email Address: Kuyler.crocker@gmail.com  
 Phone Number: 559-310-1784  
 Mailing Address: PO Box 4016,  
 Strathmore, CA 93267

**Biography:**  
 I'm a third generation Strathmore High Alumnus, graduate of Fresno State grad with degrees in Business and Public Administration, and a fifth generation Tulare County farmer. I serve on multiple county, regional, statewide, and national committees advocating for public safety, roads, water, and forest health.

**What is the biggest issue facing businesses in your district?**  
 Water continues to be the largest issue. Issues I am involved with include: safe drinking water fund, securing \$171,000,000 to build Temperance

**Does recreational marijuana have a place in Tulare County?**

Currently, the State of California allows recreational use and is sold in two cities in Tulare County. I do not support the County being in the marijuana dispensary business. I support cracking down on illegal grows in our rural neighborhoods and on our public lands, which routinely support cartel operations.

**What is the County's role in recruiting and keeping major employers?**

No impact fees, which helps in attract and expand local businesses, e.g. Children's Hospital Clinic. Robust job training program through our WIB that helps provide a qualified workforce to employers. Build regional infrastructure to support employers (Betty Drive, Caldwell Interchange, Commercial, expansion of 99). Creation of an economic development plan.

## Candidate Amy Shuklian

**Candidate Name:**  
**Amy Shuklian**  
**Candidate for Tulare County**  
**Supervisor District 3**



Shuklian

wage increases, workers compensation and insurance costs, higher taxes etc. put upon our businesses by the state legislature.

**Contact Information:**  
 Website/Social Media:  
 www.AmyforSupervisor.com  
 Email Address: Amy@AmyforSupervisor.com  
 Phone Number: 559-280-3054  
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 7401  
 Visalia, Ca 93290

**Biography:**  
 I was raised on my family's farm on the Tulare/Kings County line. I graduated from Fresno State and worked in the mental health and rehabilitation field. Prior to being elected to the Board of Supervisors in 2016, I served 9 years on the Visalia City Council, 2 years as Mayor.

**What is the biggest issue facing businesses in your district?**  
 While the homeless issue has certainly caused great frustration and nuisance to many of our local businesses, I believe some of the bigger issues are the many complex regulations i.e. minimum

**Does recreational marijuana have a place in Tulare County?**

Since recreational marijuana is now legal in California it does have a place in Tulare County, but not necessarily in the unincorporated areas. Many of our incorporated cities are adopting ordinances that allow the sales of recreational marijuana. I do not want to see proliferation of dispensaries throughout our county.

**What is the County's role in recruiting and keeping major employers?**

Making the process streamlined and business friendly plays a pivotal role in recruiting employers to Tulare County. Having our in-house economic development response team helps us to rapidly assist those companies seeking to locate here. Providing a safe community with quality of life amenities also helps in recruitment and retention.

## Candidate Brad Maaske

**Candidate Name:**  
**Brad Maaske**  
**Candidate for Tulare County**  
**Supervisor District 3**



Maaske

number of homeless and the majority suffers from addiction/mental illness. We must provide temporary low barrier housing that allows them to obtain needed services, somewhere to safely stay and lock up their belongings; then we can enforce existing laws to clean up our communities.

**Contact Information:**  
 Website/Social Media:  
 www.brad4supervisor.com  
 Facebook – Brad Maaske for Supervisor  
 Email Address: kmjbrad@gmail.com  
 Phone Number: 559-732-4444  
 Mailing Address: 103 W. Tulare Ave.,  
 Visalia CA 93277

**Biography:**  
 Brad has been self-employed in Real Estate and Construction for over 40 years. He is an expert in Real Estate Law and has been answering consumers questions on KMJ radio for the past 30 years. He has served and currently serves on several Tulare County government boards and committees.

**What is the biggest issue facing businesses in your district?**  
 Homelessness! Visalia has a disproportionate

**Does recreational marijuana have a place in Tulare County?**

The State of California law now states yes. We still have a right to limit where and how it is distributed and used. Additionally, we will have the right to fully monitor and regulate how the industry operates in Tulare County.

**What is the County's role in recruiting and keeping major employers?**

We must do everthing in our power to reduce government red tape and encourage businesses of all sizes to locate in Tulare County. The permitting process for businesses needs to be friendly, fast and welcoming.

## Candidate Larry Micari

**Candidate:**  
**Larry Micari**  
**Candidate for Tulare County**  
**Supervisor District 1**



Micari

**What is the biggest issue facing businesses in your district?**  
 Over regulations, mandated burdens such as AB5 and healthcare results in stagnant job creation and loss of employment.

**Contact Information**  
 www.micari4supervisor.com/  
 Facebook: Micari4Supervisor/  
 Instagram: @micari4supervisor1  
 Email Address: Larry@micari4supervisor.com  
 Phone: 559-838-6327  
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 481,  
 Exeter, CA 93221

**Biography:**  
 Born in Tulare County, I reside in Exeter with my wife Beth and two daughters. Serving my career in law enforcement, I obtained my BS in Criminal Justice Management and retired with the rank of Captain from the Tulare County Sheriff's Office, serving as Patrol Deputy, Terrorism Liaison, K-9, Internal Affairs, Criminal Investigator, Search and Rescue.

**Does recreational marijuana have a place in Tulare County?**

While it's been decriminalized in the State of California, I view the use of recreational marijuana as similar to alcohol. My concern which I have witnessed through my career is the potential for substance abuse and the long term damage it does.

**What is the County's role in recruiting and keeping major employers?**

Encourage the development of business' and work with new and existing employers to provide employment opportunities to our citizens of Tulare County.

## Candidate Robyn Stearns

**Candidate Name:**  
**Robyn Stearns**  
**Candidate for Tulare**  
**County Supervisor District 1**



Stearns

Exeter City Council for 8 years. I have been a self employed business owner for over 37 years. Started and owned the Wildflower Cafe in Exeter, I've been a realtor for 18 years. Experienced in local politics.

**Contact Information:**  
 Website/Social Media:  
 votestearns.com  
 stearnsforsupervisor@gmail.com  
 Phone Numbers: 559-679-2474  
 Mailing Address: 200 E. Cedar, Exeter CA 93221

**Biography:**  
 Former Mayor of Exeter, I was elected and served on

**Biggest issue facing businesses in your district:**  
 Our County needs to be user friendly for businesses. We need to work together with the cities to keep building fees low and encourage new business in our area. Becoming familiar with our current customer base and issues will assist us in bringing new industry to our area.

**Recreational marijuana have a place in Tulare County:**  
 My feeling is no. For the last 40 years we have discouraged

smoking why would we now want to encourage marijuana use? Many states like Colorado for example are seeing a multitude of problems with the legalization of recreational marijuana.

**County's role in recruiting and keeping major employers:**

Our role is to provide customer friendly service. This includes being proactive with the leads that come into our area. There needs to be short cuts to the process that assist developers in getting the zoning and approvals they need to get their project underway. Single point of contact is also important to developers.

### TECHNOLOGY AT WORK

## When is the Right Time to Upgrade Technology?



Knowing when to upgrade your technology can be confusing and overwhelming. The first thing that floods your mind is, "Why touch it if it isn't broken?". In your mind, the lost productivity and capital investment is overwhelming to think about when you are busy all the time. What if it is too late?

**Waiting Too Long**  
 Unfortunately, I am too good at procrastination. I usually wait way too long to deal with issues and inevitably

I pay for it in the end. Where does that come from? Usually for me it comes from a place of fear. Fear is an amazing emotion. It almost paralyzes you. It creates questions like, "What if this plane crashes and I'm on it?", or "What if I lose my job?". Usually most of these questions are of the unknowns of the future. Bringing on new technology is filled with all sorts of unknowns in the future. It can be overwhelming!

There is some danger from waiting too long to update your technology. There can be vulnerabilities in security, incompatibility with software or hardware, technology starts breaking more often, or the company that wrote the software program you are using is nowhere to be seen. Waiting too long can make an already overwhelming

situation even more difficult. So, what if we upgrade all the time?

**Too Soon!**  
 You would think that having the latest and greatest would be a good idea in the tech world. However, it can also have dire consequences. Most new technology does not have all the kinks ironed out yet. That means your experience will be filled with updates and bugs that cannot be fixed yet. Not to mention, the latest and greatest is usually much more expensive than the previous generation. Take iPhone for example, every time Apple reveals the newest iPhone, the last generation is marked down in price. If you upgrade too soon you might end up ripping all the new stuff out to go back to the old stuff which puts you back at square one.

That is productivity and money lost!

**Just Right**  
 So, what is the right spot? We have found that the best thing to do is to get the second or third generation behind the latest and greatest and then upgrade that every 3-5 years. The reason for this is that you are not making a big investment every year and you can plan the upgrade years in advance! At about the 5-year mark, computers and technology tend to start breaking down and becoming less reliable. It is like a car that hits 150,000 miles. It will need more money and care than a brand-new car.

I hope this takes some of the mystery out of upgrading your technology. If you have any further questions, reach out to your IT professional so that they can tell the age of your tech.

CLIP & SAVE



CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall	4	5	6 Travel Presentation: Bluegrass Country & the Smoky Mountains, Albuquerque, Israel, 12pm, City Admin Office	7	8
9	10	11 Government Affairs Meeting, 7 a.m., Buckman-Mitchell	12	13 YPN Meet Up, 5:30 p.m., Barrelhouse Brewing	14	15
16	17	18 City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall	19	20 Travel Presentation: Italy, London & Paris, 12pm, City Admin Office	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 Ambassador Monthly Breakfast, 8 a.m., Visalia First	28 Frontline Customer Service Workshop, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Wyndham Visalia	29

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:



TOP 10 KEY PROVISIONS

Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act

As Enacted on December 20, 2019 · Prepared for LPL by Davis & Harman LLP

**Open Multiple Employer Plans / Pooled Employer Plans** – The SECURE Act allows unrelated small employers to band together in “open” 401(k) multiple-employer plans (MEPs); also referred to as pooled employer plans (PEPs). This reduces the costs and administrative duties that each employer would otherwise bear alone. The Act also eliminates the “one-bad-apple” rule under which a violation by one employer participating in a MEP can trigger severe penalties for the compliant employers in the MEP.

**Safe Harbor 401(k) Plans and Timing of Plan Amendments and Adoptions** – The SECURE Act very generally permits employers to add a safe harbor feature to their existing 401(k) plans during the year; such additions are even permitted very late in the year and after the end of the year if the employer contributes at least 4 percent of employees’ pay instead of the regular 3 percent. It also allows employers to adopt a plan for a taxable year as long as the plan is adopted by the due date for the employer’s tax return for that year (including extensions).

**Startup Credit for Small Employer Plans and New Credit for Small Employer Plans Adopting Automatic Enrollment** – The SECURE Act increases the business tax credit for plan startup costs to make setting up retirement plans more affordable for small businesses. The tax credit will increase from the current cap of \$500 to up to \$5,000 in certain circumstances. It also encourages small-business owners to adopt automatic enrollment by providing a further \$500 tax credit for three years for plans that add auto-enrollment.

**Post-70½ IRA Contributions** – The prohibition on making deductible contributions to a traditional IRA after age 70½ is repealed.

**Long-Term Part-Time Employees** – The SECURE Act requires employers to include long-term part-time workers as participants in defined-contribution plans except in the case of collectively bargained plans. Eligible employees will have completed at least 500 hours of service each year for three consecutive years, and are age 21 or older. However, these participants can be excluded from employer contributions, nondiscrimination and top-heavy requirements. Previously, part-time workers could be excluded if they haven’t worked 1,000 hours in a 12-month eligibility period.

**Plan Withdrawals for Birth or Adoption** – The SECURE Act allows an

exception to the 10 percent penalty for birth or adoption. New parents can now withdraw up to \$5,000 from a retirement account within a year of a child’s birth or adoption without the 10 percent penalty those younger than 59½ would normally owe. The distribution, which is still subject to tax, can be repaid to a retirement account.

**Increased Required Beginning Date** – The SECURE Act increases the age triggering the required beginning date for plans and IRAs to 72.

**Consolidated Form 5500 Reporting for Similar Plans** – The SECURE Act offers a consolidated Form 5500 for certain defined-contribution plans with a common plan administrator to reduce administrative costs, but also increases penalties for failure to file retirement plan returns, such as Forms 5500, required notifications of registration

changes and required withholding notices.

**Fiduciary Safe Harbor for Selecting Annuity Providers** – The SECURE Act creates a safe harbor that employers can use when choosing an annuity provider to provide annuity distributions under a defined-contribution plan.

**“Stretch” RMD** – The SECURE Act imposes a 10-year distribution limit for most non-spouse beneficiaries to spend down inherited IRAs and defined-contribution plans. Before passage of the Act, withdrawals from inherited accounts could be stretched over the life of beneficiaries to mitigate taxes.

*This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific individualized tax or legal advice. We suggest that you discuss your specific situation with a qualified tax or legal advisor.*

THE EVOLUTION BEGINS

# IMPACT

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

JAMES LLOYD  
PRESIDENT & SCREENS INTERNATIONAL  
INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER

MARCH 26  
VISALIA CONVENTION CENTER

REBECCA HEISS, PhD  
CEO/FOUNDER BIOLOGIC BALANCE  
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER

PRESENTED BY

GROPPETTI AUTOMOTIVE FAMILY  
Count On Us!

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VISALIACHAMBER.ORG/IMPACT



2020 Annual Awards

SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATIONS TODAY!

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominations for the 67th Annual Awards Celebration Categories:

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

To nominate an individual or business go to:  
www.visaliachamber.org/awards  
Deadline for nominations is February 28, 2020