



Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **MAY 6, 13, 20, 27:**
Coffee with the CEO Facebook Live
Time: 8 a.m.
- **MAY 8:**
The Lunch Bunch @ Cellar Door
Time: 11:30 a.m.
Location: 1010 W. Main St.
- **MAY 28:**
Ambassador Monthly Break-fast-TENATIVE
Time: 8 a.m.
Location: Visalia First
- **AUG. 25:**
IMPACT Leadership Conference
Time: 7:30 a.m.
Location: Visalia Convention Center



VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- **Splendor of the Seine River Cruise:**
Sept. 2-12, 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
- **Discover Panama: The Land Between Seas:**
Feb. 4-12, 2021
- **Irish Discovery:**
March 16-23, 2021
- **Heritage of America:**
April 11-19, 2021
- **Culinary Italy/13 Day Tour:**
April 20-May 3, 2021
- **London & Paris Discovery:**
Oct. 19-27, 2021

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

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

Tulare County nearly stranded without disaster loans

Small Business Administration offers local small businesses, nonprofits with low-interest, deferred payment working capital loans

Reggie Ellis The federal government is offering low-interest, deferred payment loans to small businesses faced with paying employees and vendors without the cash flow provided by customers.

Tulare County businesses are eligible for these loans, but that wasn't the case just a week ago. When the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced on March 12 it would provide low interest, deferred payment loans to small businesses impacted by shelter-in-place rules across the country, a handful of Central Valley counties were not among those eligible for the financial tool. While Kern County was listed, Tulare, Kings and Fresno counties were not. Visalia Chamber of Commerce CEO Gail Zurek was notified of the omission on March 16 and began calling businesses and urging them to contact SBA and tell the stories of how they had been affected by rules limiting social interaction and the everyday commerce of American life.

"Initially I was shocked and horrified," Zurek said. "I had just spent days hearing from small businesses worried they were not going to be able to keep the doors open."

Zurek the stories of struggling Visalia businesses varied widely, but could be described in a few broad scenarios: 1.) They didn't have enough people coming through the door to conduct consumer-driven business; 2.) their suppliers were unable to provide them with the raw materials to turn into goods and services; 3.) an accumulative impact that began shutting down business-to-business transactions. Zurek said she was surprised to find out that without a disaster declaration in place, an area's inclusion was based on reports

from businesses about financial damages.

"We don't have the type of businesses in this area that take out government loans," Zurek said. "Traditionally, we have not been a business community that looks for government handouts. So the process was new to many of us in the area."

While chamber members were inundating the SBA's Fresno Office with phone calls and emails asking why Tulare County was not listed, simultaneously local politicians were becoming aware of the situation as well. Congressman Devin Nunes' (CA-22) office began making phone calls at the federal level to lobby for their constituents to be included. Congressman T.J. Cox sent a letter to Gov. Gavin Newsom asking him to invoke a section of the Small Business Act that

permit a Governor to certify an area has suffered "economic injury" as the result of a disaster and in need of financial assistance that is not available on "reasonable terms and conditions" in the absence of a disaster declaration by the President, which didn't come for another five days.

"The coronavirus has unfortunately jeopardized the economic well-being of this area, because people are concerned with protecting the health and safety of themselves and their families," said Rep. T.J. Cox. "Both our local firms and residents are feeling the impact of the coronavirus. Small businesses tend to have little cash

reserves, and limited ability to raise capital. As a result, such small firms are unable to meet the financial demands when unforeseen disasters occur. [...] SBA's assistance can help address these problems immediately and help our residents begin to recover."

On March 19, the SBA responded by adding Tulare, Kings and Fresno to the list of eligible counties. Dawn Golik, district director for SBA's Fresno Office, said initially 30 counties were eligible for disaster relief loans due to COVID-19, but now all 58 California counties are eligible. Golik encouraged every business to apply, as each loan is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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GAIL ZUREK

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The new normal: Coming together

As I scan spreadsheets and financial documents, I know I'm not alone. I know millions of other business owners are looking at their spreadsheets trying to figure out how to make these numbers work. The reality of our "new normal" leaves me desperately searching for solutions, sleepless and with a nagging feeling, there is something more at stake.

At the chamber, we fight for business but it's more than that. We fight for our communities and a way of life that has helped this country thrive. That sounds a bit like an introduction to a Superman comic book series but it's the truth I hold in my heart, it's the truth from which I lead this organization. I've spent time with other chamber professionals wrestling with the philosophy that encourages innovation, drive, and entrepreneurship all while providing for the less fortunate among us. We have long worried that capitalism was misunderstood, socialism far too in vogue and independence was becoming a fading principal.

Several years ago, Michael and I had the opportunity to take our boys to China. For us, this was a history and civics lesson that would last a lifetime. There is much about Chinese history, culture, and people I respect. Introducing us to that history and culture was powerful but the people we met provided some of the best lessons of our trip. Each night we huddled in our hotel room sharing what we thought about what we'd seen and frankly not seen. The contrast between our freedoms as Americans and their oppression became a running theme. When we returned to the U.S., we were met with a giant United States flag at customs. My oldest turned, looked at me and said, "I've never seen anything more beautiful." Liberty became real.

As I sit in this new normal, I wonder if the conversation with chamber colleagues and lessons from China are part of what's causing my nagging feelings. As a Chamber, we have fought, tirelessly for local business. We've had big and substantial wins. Frankly, the work we're pouring out is focused, powerful and some of the best I've seen us produce. We're focused on business. Our mission has



Gail Zurek
Visalia Chamber
President & CEO

never been more tangible. But is there an even bigger fight around the corner? What are the lessons we are learning now?

As we fight a war with an invisible enemy, I worry there have been casualties that have not yet been accounted for. As we work to ensure the health of our country, are we unknowingly giving up the very things that define us? As we push distancing, are we driving a wedge that cannot be overcome? Are we creating a safe environment or an environment that will undo centuries of exceptionalism? Am I the only one asking these questions?

I worry we are too quick to agree in fear than stand out and question. I am desperate for real questions that have hard answers. I want to know others have wrestled with these issues. They must have. While I am worried about offending or being misunderstood, I am much more worried about the lack of dialogue. Have we all agreed this new normal is the best path forward? I'm not sure I have.

So as I wrestle with how to keep providing services with demising incomes, as I fight to keep signing payroll checks, as I worry about keeping my family healthy and safe, I also worry deeply about the future of this amazing county. I worry about what these new normal will breed and what our country will look like in the years to come.

The fight for communities' resurgences begins long before stay home orders are lifted. It begins now as we determine those things that will define us, drive us and allow for tomorrow. If you spend a moment, you can see it. Hope is bubbling up. More people are engaged in city council meetings. We have learned the value of spending our dollars locally. Neighbors are meeting. We are focused on the things that make us better.

I started this year with the mantra that Hard is not Impossible. Never did I realize how hard it would become. But my mantra doesn't change. This is not impossible. We will survive this. Let's have conversations now that are hard, valuable and lead to ensuring we are stronger than we've ever been. Let us come together and fight for what we value. Join us as we stage the biggest comeback ever.

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS



Catalyst for Change



Community Convener



Champion for Business

BOARD SPOTLIGHT



Name: Brett Taylor
Company: Tulare County Association of REALTORS®
Title: CEO

Why do you serve on the Chamber Board of Directors? I enjoy being part of the Community and am thankful for all the important work the Chamber does.

What has the Chamber done in the last 12 months that has helped your business? The Chamber has been a strong voice for local business and fights for our rights. I have also used the Chamber for fantastic networking opportunities.

What's your favorite family tradition? We throw a 4th of July party every year for the neighborhood.

Does your family have a "motto" – spoken or unspoken? Every day when I drop my kids off at school I tell them "I love you, be kind and make good choices"

What was your first job? I worked at Aunt Anne's in the Visalia Mall.

About this publication ...

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AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

Name: Rita Crandall
Organization Name: Valley PBS
Title: Community Liaison / Retired Board Member

How has the Chamber and the Ambassador Program helped you or your organization to grow? Being a Chamber Ambassador means I am able to meet new business owners and share with them information about the numerous things they probably don't already know about the services of ValleyPBS. Many know of the renown children's programing and the magnificent adult programs broadcast over the air, but often they are unaware of things such as Ready to Learn workshops, Family Circle events, viewers' ability to post their own videos on ByYou and now the At-Home Learning with digital resources that adhere to California's state curriculum that are available while school is out during the Shelter at Home order of the Governor.



Why is it important to get involved in the Visalia Chamber programs and events? Being involved in community affairs has always been important to me, but the special Chamber events and numerous programs offered through the Chamber have broadened my ability to serve my community while connecting to the many services available in Visalia. The Chamber always strives to offer the best of everything

to our community and I am proud I can benefit personally while assisting others.

The best part of working/volunteering for your organization is? It's hard to single out only one thing that makes volunteering for ValleyPBS so rewarding, but doing so gives me the ability to assist people in understanding that there is so much more offered by ValleyPBS other than just the Sesame Street programs that so many folks grew up watching. Since families and their children can benefit from those services it makes me happy to be involved with ValleyPBS.

Where is your favorite place to go in Visalia with friends and family? I have so many favorite places to go here in Visalia and each one is a reflection of the wonderful community experiences available to all of our citizens. Besides the magnificent parks, outstanding restaurants, exceptional music and arts venues, and the extraordinary theater performances I really enjoy attending concerts and supporting the Sequoia Symphony Orchestra. Maestro Kiesling is phenomenal and always makes those concerts fun and exciting!!

COMMUNITY LOYAL MEMBERS

A thriving community starts here!



The Visalia Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome our newest members. We encourage individuals and businesses to support Chamber Member Businesses.

NEW

Business Connector Member:

- BSK ASSOCIATES

RENEW

Regional Leader Member:

- SIVC / SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY COLLEGE, INC.*

Keystone Member:

- VISALIA MALL *

Community Investor Member:

- COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS *

Business Builder Members:

- COUNTY OF TULARE
- SOCIALGAS
- TUCOEMAS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Business Connector Member:

- MECHANICS BANK-MAIN STREET *

Small Business Members:

- CARROLL'S TIRE WAREHOUSE
- BRYAN COMPANY
- HNH NUT CO. *
- INTERNATIONAL AGRI CENTER
- KLINK CITRUS ASSOCIATION
- SPRAYING DEVICES INC.
- VALLEY YELLOW PAGES

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

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Business may not even be immediately impacted as the disaster may take time to affect them, which is why the disaster declaration for SBA is good through December 2020," she said.

The loans are economic injury disaster loans which provide working capital for businesses and non profit organizations to make payroll, pay their electric bills and build products and services. These loans cannot be used to repair, replace or purchase physical assets. SBA is offering loans up to \$2 million with interest rates of 3.75% for small businesses without credit options and a rate of 2.75% for nonprofits with terms as long as 30 years.

These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact.

Business owners can begin their application on the SBA website at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.

The website is already overwhelmed and asking small businesses to apply after 7 p.m. EST to avoid issues. The website can also timeout while you are trying to input the right documentation and numbers throughout the application process. Gollk offered a few tips for filling out the online application:

■ Be sure to hit the "Save" button in the top right-hand corner of every page after completing the page. This will

ensure that if your session times out you don't have to begin the x-step process over again.

■ Important documents businesses will need to fill out include: IRS Form 4506-T for each person owning at least 20% of the business; your most recent federal income tax return for the business, which includes the legal name of your business not a DBA or abbreviated names, EIN number and legal name of the owners; a year-end profit and loss statement and balance sheet; SBA Form 1368 providing monthly sales figures; and SBA Form 2202, a Schedule of Liabilities listing all fixed debts, such as loans or leases with annual or monthly payments and end date for the borrowed amount.

After you have completed step 1, the loan application, SBA will then review your credit before beginning step 2, verifying your losses, determining your eligibility and reaching a loan determination. The goal is to finish this process within two weeks of completing the application. Step 3 includes reviewing and signing loan closing documents, followed by an initial disbursement. For economic injury loans, the disbursement would be \$25,000 within five days of closing documents. A case manager will then be assigned to each business to ensure you meet all of the conditions of your loan. Loans may be adjusted after closing due to changing circumstances, such as increasing the loan for unexpected repair costs or reducing the loan due to additional insurance proceeds.

For additional information, please contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center. Call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or e-mail disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

SMALL BUSINESS EMERGENCY MEMBERSHIP PLAN
 WE'RE HERE TO CHAMPION FOR YOU.

Thank You FOR BEING A MEMBER 5-75 YR-MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

75 YEARS
 Visalia Citrus Packing Group, Inc

65 YEARS
 Financial Credit Network, Inc.
 J.C. Lansdowne, Inc.

60 YEARS
 Visalia Times-Delta

55 YEARS
 Kaweah Delta Health Care District

50 YEARS
 Lawrence Tractor Company
 The Depot
 Valley Pacific Petroleum

45 YEARS
 Screw Conveyor Corporation

40 YEARS
 Gilman Harris Travioli Slover
 Williams, Brodersen, Pritchett
 & Burke LLP

35 YEARS
 Ashoori & Co. Jewelers
 California Wire Cloth, Inc.
 Casa Grande Senior Care Home
 CIGNA
 Eye Surgical & Medical Associates
 KFSN - TV Channel 30
 Mill Creek Management, Inc.
 Mission Linen Supply
 ServiceMaster by Benevento
 Visalia Plumbing
 Wonder Valley Ranch Resort &
 Conference Center

30 YEARS
 Potter's Porta-Potties

25 YEARS
 Kaweah Delta Hospice of Tulare
 County Foundation
 Pacific Capital Strategies, Inc.
 Pacific Southwest Container
 Tulare Outlets
 Visalia Convention Center
 Visalia Family Practice

20 YEARS
 Fairfield Inn Visalia/Sequoia Gateway
 Fresno Pacific University Visalia
 Center
 JOANN Stores West Coast
 Distribution Center
 Kaweah Delta Radiology Department
 Miracle-Ear Hearing Centers
 Security Self-Storage
 The Barn
 United Signs International, Inc.
 Valley Oaks Golf Course
 Visalia Electric Motor Service |
 Magnetech Industrial Services, Inc.
 Visalia Lions Band Review

15 YEARS
 Bryson Cancer Care, Inc.
 DMI Agency
 Lagomarsino Group
 Patrick L. Salazar State Farm
 Insurance Agency
 Roy Dressel Photography
 Visalia Adventure Park, Inc.
 Visalia Sunset Rotary

10 YEARS
 Arts Consortium
 Berkshire Hathaway Home Services
 Culligan Water Conditioning

Goodies Cookies & Specialty Cakes
 Keith Williams DDS
 Perine & Dicken
 Tri-Anim Health Service, Inc
 Trilotech
 Veterans Memorial District

5 YEARS
 Acclaim Credit Technologies
 Arts Visalia
 Bethlehem Center
 Comfort Now Air Conditioning
 & Heating
 Companion Animal Medical Center
 Ed Dena's Auto Center
 Edelman Financial Engines
 Enjoy Magazine
 Epic Print & Promo
 Freestyle Event Services
 Gateway Financial Planning Group
 Goal Line Media
 Golden State Cardiac &
 Thoracic Surgery, Inc
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 Main Street Office Suites /
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 Partyworks, Inc. dba Party City
 RiverCross Church
 Saint Anthony Retreat and
 Conference Center
 Sherwood Law Offices
 Sun-Gazette
 V Town Derby Dames
 Zach Green Films



Congratulations to **Personnel Solutions Unlimited, Inc.** who is celebrating their 19th year in business. Shelly Little, CEO and President of the company gives thanks to the Tulare & Kings County businesses that have supported her company throughout the years.

We love seeing members support one another!

Visalia Rawide purchased \$500 worth of food from **The Planing Mill** to feed **Kaweah Delta Health Care District** workers.

Visalia First partnered with **FoodLink of Tulare County** and **Visalia Rescue Mission** to help get food and essentials to those in need during the COVID-19 crisis.

ERA Valley Pro Realty purchased \$500 worth of food from **Quesadilla Gorilla** for local police and healthcare workers.

Tucomas Federal Credit Union purchased \$500 worth of food from **Pita Kabob** to feed local first responders and medical staff.

Jo-Ann Fabrics donated fabric to **College of the Sequoias** fashion faculty, students and volunteers to make masks for local healthcare workers.

4Creeks purchased \$500 worth of food from **Pita Kabob** to feed local first-responders and medical workers.

Total Nutrition helped to relieve the stress for families



during the COVID-19 crisis. The business sponsored weekly dinners to deserving families in the community.

The Painted Table created a new "Meals to Go" menu. With each purchased family Meal to Go, they donated a free meal to **Breaking the Chains**, a nonprofit that provides hope, healing and restoration to survivors of human trafficking.

Chapala Grill along with other valley restaurants and chefs, united to feed local farm workers during the COVID-19 crisis.

ImagineU Children's Museum created inspirational yards signs, available for community purchases to contribute to the museum while inspiring hope for the community.



Edible Arrangements delivered free fruit treats to front-line workers throughout Visalia, including pharmacists, physicians, first responders and store clerks.



The Sigal Family, owners of the **Visalia Rawhide**, have committed over \$30,000 to Central Valley non-profits to immediately assist those in need during the current national emergency.



During the COVID-19 crisis, the **Tulare County Library** made it possible to continue services such as storytime. Library staff provided recorded storytimes for young patrons and parents to enjoy.

Congratulations to **Valley Oak SPCA**, who received \$51,625 from **PetSmart Charities** to keep pets in their homes and help adoptable animals find new homes.

CITY UPDATE

Supporting Local Business During COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, the City of Visalia remains committed to protecting and preserving the health and safety of our community as our highest priority.

As we all work together to continue to flatten the curve and abide by the Governor's Executive Order, it's important that we continue to support our business community. Here are some ways to help:



ORDER TAKEOUT

Ordering food or drinks (to go of course) from your favorite local eatery for delivery or pick-up is a great way to support local. If you are able, consider that much of your favorite food may even be an easy item to tuck in the freezer and enjoy at a later date.

ORDER ONLINE

Many local businesses have made their wares available for purchase online for the first time ever, or they're selling through an online marketplace. Shopping a local retailer

keeps dollars local, while still providing the goods you need with a special local connection.

CONNECT ONLINE

Consider how your favorite local business or professional may have moved their services online. Dance and fitness classes from the comfort of your living room are available, or ask if your favorite local business is conducting classes or tutorials online.

BUY GIFT CARDS

Many of our local businesses provide services that can't be utilized this very moment, in that instance, consider

purchasing a gift card or gift certificate. These purchases will help boost their immediate sales and provides you with an experience or service to look forward to in the future.

The decision to support local can be the extra boost a business owner, and the employees who count on them, need this very moment.

For a complete breakdown of business resources related to COVID-19, visit www.visalia.city/covid19. For the latest updates on City operations and services, follow the City of Visalia on social @CityofVisalia.

THE LAW AT WORK

Help for workers from the federal government in response to COVID-19



COVID-19 has impacted every business, every employee, every facet of life, everywhere. In response to the outbreak and the seismic impact it has had on the economy and businesses large and small, President Trump signed into law HR 6201, known as the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act." The Act applies to private employers with fewer than 500 employees and certain public employers. Below is a summary of this new law.

FMLA EXPANSION FOR COVID-19

The Act amends the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow an employee who is unable to work (or telework) to take leave due to a need to care for a child (under 18 years of age) if the child's school or daycare has been closed, or the childcare provider is unavailable, due to a "public health emergency." A public health emergency means an emergency with respect to COVID-19 declared by a federal, state, or local authority.



Brett T. Abbott
Gubler & Abbott LLP

Under the FMLA provisions, when leave is needed due to a school or daycare closure, the employer can provide the first 10 days of leave unpaid, then subsequent absences for this reason must be paid at 2/3 the employee's regular rate of pay. The Act incorporates a cap of \$200 a day and \$10,000 in aggregate. If the first 10 days are unpaid, an employee may elect to substitute any accrued vacation leave, personal leave, or medical/sick leave for the unpaid leave.

PAID SICK LEAVE FOR COVID-19

The Act also has a provision regarding paid sick leave for COVID-19. Employers with fewer than 500 employees must immediately make available 80 hours of paid sick leave for full-time employees (or the equivalent of the average number of hours over two weeks for part-time employees) for the following reasons:

1. The employee is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.

2. The employee has been advised by a healthcare provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.

3. The employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis.

4. The employee is caring for an individual who is subject to an order as described in subparagraph (1) or has been advised as described in paragraph (2).

5. The employee is caring for their son or daughter if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, or the childcare provider of the son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions.

6. The employee is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor.

Paid sick leave is paid at the employee's regular rate for a use described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3); and two-thirds of an employee's regular rate for a use described in paragraph (4), (5), or (6). Paid sick leave is capped: \$511 per day and \$5,110 in the aggregate for a use described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3); and \$200 per day and

\$2,000 in the aggregate for a use described in paragraph (4), (5), or (6).

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

The Act offers job protection – specifically, the employer must make reasonable efforts to restore the employee to the same or an equivalent position. However, the FMLA's requirement that an employee be restored to the same or equivalent position after leave does not apply to an employer with fewer than 25 employees if the employee's position no longer exists due to economic conditions or other changes in the employer's operations that affect employment and are caused by the public health crisis during the period of leave.

Employers must pay the benefits, but they will receive a tax credit for doing so.

This article is for education and information purposes only; it should not be construed as legal advice. If you have an employment law question for inclusion in a future article, contact Brett T. Abbott at Gubler & Abbott (brett@thecalifornialawyers.com). For specific employment law advice or other legal assistance, contact Gubler & Abbott (559) 625-9600, 1110 N. Chinowth St., Visalia, CA 93291 (www.thecalifornialawyers.com).

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE OPEN FOR TAKE-OUT OR CURBSIDE DELIVERY
You can search our directory with the listing "Take-Out/Curbside Delivery" for a full list of members participating: visaliachamber.org.

I MISSED ONE OF THE CHAMBER'S WEBINARS, DO YOU HAVE A RECORDING OF IT?
Members can access recorded webinars through their Member Portal. You can login!: visaliachamber.org

I NEED HELP TO ADVERTISE MY BUSINESS?
At no cost for Members, you can post job and events to the Chamber's website, create Member-to-Member Deals and more!

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

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MEDIA PARTNERS:



VISALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Education During the Pandemic



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

On March 13, 2020, we closed our schools to help ensure the health, safety, and well-being of our students and staff during the coronavirus pandemic. Unfortunately, it is likely that we will remain closed for the remainder of the school year. I am amazed and grateful for the dedication of our employees who continue to provide instruction and nutritional services to our students during this unprecedented and unpredictable time.

This is a difficult time for all of us, but especially for our high school seniors and their families. Events such as college visits, prom, and athletics have been canceled, and our community is grieving the loss of traditions they hold dear to their hearts. Most likely, we will need to implement alternative commencement ceremonies. We are working on options to celebrate our students and their achievements.

As traditional schooling gives way to distance learning, we must endeavor to keep our connections strong and provide support to our families while we are physically distanced. Our teachers have contacted parents and students by telephone and will continue to do so a minimum of once per week. Through our outreach, we have learned that 63% of families prefer paper format to online learning. With that in mind, and to ensure that all of our 29,375 students have access to curriculum, we will continue to provide learning opportunities in both online and paper formats.



Teachers may use online platforms to guide student learning and may also create lesson videos to share with their students. Through phone calls, emails, and online learning platforms, teachers will provide instructional support and differentiation for the Standards-aligned District curriculum.

Currently, we are not utilizing two-way video streaming services, because we do not have safeguards against exposure to inappropriate images and language. Unfortunately, "Zoom-bombing" is a new trend, and the FBI has provided warnings to schools. We are continuing to explore options for distance learning and are researching possible options for safer two-way streaming services.

To support the social and emotional needs of our students, staff, and families, VUSD has developed the VUSD Careline. Through Careline, our school psychologists and social workers are available to provide support,

encouragement, or just someone to talk through worries and concerns.

The District is continuing the grab-n-go meal service that began shortly after the school closure. Meals are available at more than two dozen locations across the city including selected elementary and middle school sites, as well as selected school bus stops. Free lunch and breakfast is available for children ages 1 to 18 years old through a drive through or pick-up system. Five days' worth of meals are distributed on the first regular work day of each week according to our established schedule, which may be found at <http://bit.ly/3b22y9P>.

We encourage our staff and families to take the stay at home orders seriously and use physical distancing when it is necessary to leave their homes. Helping to ensure the health and emotional well-being of our citizens is the most important job we have as a community. Although life does not look and feel the same as what we are used to; together, we will make it through this challenging time.

Grades 7-8

HEALTHCARE NOTE

FHCN committed to helping in this time of crisis



remained committed to continuing to manage the health of everyone in the communities we serve. During the last few weeks, we've taken many additional steps to ensure that connecting to our services is safe and easy. These steps have included:

Making it possible for many of our visits with patients to be completed virtually (by telephone or video conference), rather than in person. This permits patients to still receive care while maximizing their safety with regard to COVID19. Both patients and clinicians have reported great satisfaction with being able to "see" their doctor remotely, rather than having to come into the health center.

We have continuously monitored the recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Tulare County Public Health Department and updated our internal workflows accordingly to ensure the safety of our patients and our staff. These constantly



Kerry Hydash, MPA,
President & Chief Executive Officer
Family Healthcare Network

changing recommendations have presented some new challenges for our teams, but our commitment to patient safety is such that everyone has pulled together to make it happen.

Recognizing that the more information we have about the spread of COVID19 the more we can work toward keeping our most vulnerable population members safe, we've opened drive-through COVID19 testing sites at some of our health centers.

We've been active in teaming up with the public health department and local shelters to provide health care access to homeless individuals. Through our virtual visit line an individual can connect with a health care provider without leaving the shelter. Again this has created an opportunity for an important care connection without requiring patients to travel unnecessarily to our clinic.

Our commitment to meeting our communities' care needs while ensuring patient safety has always been a cornerstone of FHCN's mission and daily operations. The current pandemic has merely presented us with additional challenges that we're meeting head-on to keep us able to continue providing quality care for all.



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