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# Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**APRIL 1:**  
**Leadership Visalia Golf Tournament**  
Valley Oaks Golf Course  
12:01 Shotgun start  
Register at [www.visaliachamber.org](http://www.visaliachamber.org)

**APRIL 6:**  
**Identity Theft Seminar**  
Presented by LegalShield  
At Brandman University  
9:00 - 10:00 am  
Reservations requested: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/calendar/2016-03-01>

**APRIL 21:**  
**Business Member Appreciation Night**  
Presented by:  
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce  
Visalia Convention Center  
5:30 - 8:00 pm  
Free - for Chamber Members  
\$20.00 - for Non-Members  
Registration is requested:  
[www.visaliachamber.org](http://www.visaliachamber.org)

**APRIL 26:**  
**Business After Hours Mixer**  
Rabobank  
3443 S. Mooney Blvd.  
5:30 - 7:30 pm

**APRIL 27:**  
**Stop Harassment Workshop**  
Presented by: Pacific Employers  
Lamp Liter Inn  
7:30 - 10:00 am  
\$35.00 - for Chamber Members  
\$45.00 - for Non-Members  
Registration is required: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/details/candidate-forum-3468>

**APRIL 28:**  
**Chamber Ambassador Breakfast Meeting**  
Visalia First Assembly Church  
8:00 am



## Identity Theft

Identity Theft affects millions of Americans each year. Learn how you can have the absolute best access to professional help in protecting and restoring your identity.

At this free workshop you will learn how to get access to:

- Consultations
- Identity Restoration
- Privacy Monitoring
- Security Monitoring

Hosted by LegalShield

**Wednesday, April 6, 2016**  
**9:00 - 10:00 am**  
**Brandman University -**  
**645 S. County Center**  
**Free**

Reservations requested:  
[www.visaliachamber.org/events/](http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/)

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



## Visalia Mall – A First in California

### Visalia Mall

Written by  
**Nicola Wissler,**  
Visalia Chamber of Commerce

Did you know that the Visalia Mall was the first enclosed shopping mall in California? I didn't know this fact until I recently sat down with Richard Feder General Manager at the Visalia Mall. It turns out there are a lot of things that I did not know about the Visalia Mall, and I am guessing you probably don't know most of this information either.

The Visalia Mall was built in 1964, it was remodeled in 1989 and again in 1995. Today, it is the only enclosed mall in the trade area which is about a 40 mile wide radius. Currently the Visalia Mall is 440,000 square feet and is the home to more than 70 retailers, and best news is that in 2015 sales per square foot hit an all-time high. With more than 6 million shoppers annually, the Visalia Mall is a high traffic area which is an ideal location for small business owners and entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services.

Many people many not know that you can rent space at the Visalia Mall on a weekly or monthly basis to advertise your business. For a small start-up business, who may not be able to afford to rent a store front location, renting a kiosk at the Visalia Mall is a great option. There is guaranteed high foot traffic and exposure which can be a key component to building a brand or business. Feder stated "Businesses can also utilize mall space to advertise and create a distinct connection with the local target market and broaden their reach". Advertising at the Visalia Mall comes in many shapes and sizes, everything from floor decals, skybanners, pop-up banners, Children's Play area / stroller sponsorship, and table tents at the food court. Businesses can even have a sponsored event at the Visalia Mall. "We really want people to think of the Visalia Mall as a great advertising venue for local businesses".

When asked to explain what have been the keys to success for the Visalia Mall Feder noted "One of the keys to success is that we focus on making the mall a safe, fun, family friendly establishment. We know that most of our shoppers are younger (between the ages of 18-44). We try to make the mall inviting to these shoppers and their young families." Many of the retail stores within the Visalia Mall cater to young families with a particularly strong focus on juniors. Feder noted that another key to success is "The Visalia Mall enjoys very loyal customers, and the addition of several key national retailers like The Children's Place, Forever 21, Francesca's COLLECTIONS, G By Guess, Starbuck's, Express, and Crazy 8 over the last four years has helped to increase traffic and sales for the Visalia Mall property."

With lots of foot traffic at the Mall one of the new programs being

implemented this year is Customer UP Front Parking. Mall employees have been asked not to park in the smaller eastern parking lots and are required to use the outer areas of the parking lot and the parking structure, leaving prime surface parking spaces close to the Mall entrance open for customers. The results have been positive. This is just one more way that they Mall is working toward providing their customers with the best experience possible.

As the regional hub for retail shopping the Mall is a major factor in Visalia's economic strength. Every item purchased at the Visalia Mall includes sales tax which is given to the City of Visalia to support City projects including; police, fire, roads and more. One of the trends that continues to grow is e-commerce, or online sales. Many brick and mortar stores are turning to e-commerce in order to grow their busi-



ness, while other businesses choose to be strictly e-commerce. "One thing that many people don't realize is that when you purchase an item online there is no sale tax revenue for the City of Visalia," noted Feder. The Visalia Mall is part of a trade organization the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) which has been supporting e-fairness for more than a decade. The premise is that "a sale is a sale" regardless of whether the purchase takes place on Main Street, in shopping centers or online." Feder urges Visalians to check out the website [www.efairness.org](http://www.efairness.org) to learn more about how the current sales tax system is unable to support the 21st century retail marketplace.

The Chamber would like to encourage businesses to learn more about advertising opportunities with the Visalia Mall and encourage citizens to learn more about how tax dollars are spent and where funding for City projects comes from. We would like to thank the Visalia Mall for being such a strong supporters of local business for more than fifty years.

## 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.

- **AAA AUTOMOBILE CLUB Insurance**  
(559) 636-5733
- **ALL PRO TRUCK & AUTO BODY Automotive Service**  
(559) 308-9069
- **ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA Construction**  
(661) 392-8729
- **BLOOM GROUP Property Management & Investment, Real Estate**  
(559) 625-9500

■ **BRAVO FARMS Restaurant**  
(559) 738-9190

■ **COMPAC SORTING EQUIPMENT INC. Agricultural Services**  
(559) 334-0118

■ **JAVIS TACO SHACK Restaurant**  
(559) 635-0600

■ **OFFICE SOURCE 360 Office Supplies & Furniture**  
(559) 592-3364

■ **RUDDY'S APPLIANCE Appliance Sales & Service**  
(559) 732-4545

### Renewing Members

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

- Best Buy Market\*
- Bryson Cancer Care, Inc.
- El Rosal Restaurant

- Executives Association of Tulare County\*
- Giant Chevrolet Cadillac\*
- Haulaway Storage Containers\*
- Orchard Supply Hardware
- Ouzonian Properties
- Patrick L. Salazar State Farm Insurance Agency
- Phil Cline Consulting
- Red Carpet Car Wash
- Red Lobster Visalia California\*
- Redwood Springs Healthcare Center
- Saint Anthony's Retreat/ Santa Teresita Youth Conference Center
- Seals/Biehle General Contractors
- Smart N Final\*
- Staples\*
- Summit Homebuilders Inc
- The Villas at Lovers Lane\*
- Tri-Anim Health Service, Inc
- Tulare County Federal Credit Union
- Tule River Tribe Eagle Mountain Casino\*
- Visalia Electric Motor Service\*
- Zylstra Automotive\*

\*110% Club Members

## VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS



Business-Government



Business Relations



Promoting Community



Strong Local Economy

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

# An Open Letter to My Fellow Visalians:

Earlier this month the Board of Directors of your Chamber of Commerce voted to support the upcoming bond measure for Kaweah Delta District Hospital. This bond measure will be mailed to you in April. Approval of this bond measure will allow our medical district to respond to new state regulations mandating new earthquake compliant facilities.



**Norris McElroy**  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

Preserving, strengthening and supporting our economy in a cornerstone of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. As Chairperson of the Board of Directors I am proud of the work the Chamber does in this arena.

Asking taxpayers to help invest in our medical district was not a decision the Board took lightly. However these state mandates are necessary. Given the size and scope of the required project, Kaweah Delta is unable to do it alone. If this bond measure does not pass Kaweah Delta will not meet the new state earthquake compliant facilities requirements and would cause devastating effects on our community economically and personally through loss of jobs and a deterioration of health care choices. Health Care is a key to a successful community and paramount in recruiting new businesses to locate in Visalia. Losing acute care beds, reducing the footprint of Kaweah Delta, and ultimately reducing overall service to our community would hurt that effort and hurt Visalia.

The conversation about supporting the bond initiate cannot

exclude the economic impact Kaweah Delta has on our community. The Kaweah Delta Health Care District eight campus footprint contributes \$1 billion impact to our local economy. Employing over 4,200 people (at an average wage of over \$30/hr.) these professional career level jobs are vital to our community. Recently, we supported the City in their efforts to recruit a large distribution company to locate in our community. This employer would bring valuable jobs to our region. The City's incentive package to recruit this employer was aggressive as it should be. As a community we are willing to fight for these jobs and the economic impact they will create and it seemed natural to our Board that we would do the same for an employer who has been invested in and contributes to our community and local economy since 1961.

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors supports Kaweah Delta's General Obligation Bond Initiative. We ask you to join us in keeping this important economic engine working for Visalia.

Sincerely,  
Norris McElroy  
Chairperson  
Visalia Chamber of Commerce

## Calvary Chapel announces the 2016 Tulare County Prayer Breakfast.

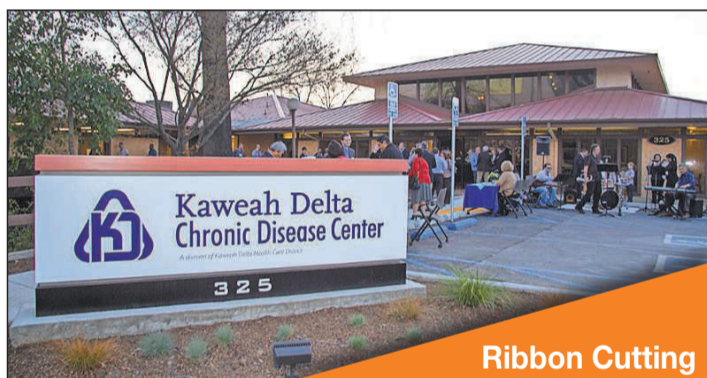
Wednesday, May 4, 2016 7:00 - 9:00 am at the Visalia Convention Center. Tickets are \$30.00 and can be purchased at [www.visaliatix.com](http://www.visaliatix.com) or by phone at 559-713-4000.

General Boykin was the United States Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence under President Bush from 2002 - 2007. During his 36-year career in the military he spent 13 years in the Delta Force, including two years as its commander, and was involved in numerous high profile missions, including the 1980 Iran Hos-

tage rescue attempt, the 1992 hunt for Pablo Escobar in Columbia, and the Black Hawk Down incident in Mogadishu, Somalia.

A fundraiser dinner and intel briefing with Lt. General (Ret.) William Boykin will be held on May 3rd at 6:00 pm at the Lamp Liter Inn. Tickets are \$65.00 donation. Purchase tickets online at [ccvisalia.com](http://ccvisalia.com) or at Calvary Chapel Visalia 11720 Ave 264, Visalia (559-687-0220).

### GROUNDBREAKING • GRAND OPENING • RIBBON CUTTING • CEREMONIES



Ribbon Cutting

#### Kaweah Delta Chronic Care Management Center

325 S. Willis • 559-624-4080



Ribbon Cutting

#### Transitions Children's Services

1945 N. Helm Ave • 559-222-5437



Ribbon Cutting

#### DSW Shoe Warehouse

2135 S. Mooney Blvd • 707-718-2970

## Local Program is California's Newest Healthy Behaviors Learning Center



Visalia, CA, March 17, 2016: Among the hundreds of thousands of children in the Central Valley, sedentary lifestyles and poor nutrition cause serious health issues, lead to social and psychological problems and contribute to poor academic performance. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that one in three children and nearly half of all Latino youngsters are likely to develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetimes. If this continues, it will result in an unprecedented rate of premature death and disability and staggering financial repercussions for our families and communities. With 16,000 students attending its afterschool programs throughout Tulare County, ProYouth is positioned to meet this challenge and reverse this trend.

According to Dr. Andria Fletcher, who co-leads California's Healthy Behaviors Initiative, "ProYouth's commitment to ensuring that students are healthy, fit and ready to learn is real. It's successfully addressing childhood obesity, the most common, preventable and costly medical condition facing our communities, and it's making a difference in the lives of thousands of students and their families. We're thrilled to announce that the Crowley Elementary School site has been officially recognized as one of 33 Healthy Behaviors Centers in our state and will serve as a world-class learning lab for school districts and community-based organizations throughout the Central Valley."

ProYouth has worked hard to achieve this exemplary level and CEO Daryn Davis and her staff are seeing the results. "Students are increasingly making healthy eating and physical activity a way of life. They have access to more fruits and vegetables through our USDA meal program and local partners and are learning how to prepare healthy snacks at home. They love being in dance and yoga and cooking classes and gardening projects and look forward to being physically active for at least 60 minutes every day." ProYouth isn't just changing lives, it's saving lives. For more information or to visit our region's newest Learning Center, please contact Teresa Ramos, ProYouth Community Relations Director, at 559-723-3668

California's Healthy Behaviors Initiative was launched by the Center for Collaborative Solutions and the Network for a Healthy California in 2004. Funded by the California Department of Public Health, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and The California Endowment, the Initiative has developed and field tested exemplary practices, led numerous Professional Learning Communities, certified 33 state-wide, regionally-based Learning Centers and published *Changing Lives, Saving Lives: A Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Food Security in Afterschool Programs*. Widely recognized as leading the way in combatting the childhood obesity crisis, CCS and its partners have positively impacted the physical activity levels, eating habits and food security of more than two million children and their families in California. More information is available at [www.ccscenter.org](http://www.ccscenter.org) or by contacting Dr. Andria Fletcher at 916-208-6600 or [DrAndiAsp@aol.com](mailto:DrAndiAsp@aol.com).

#### About this publication ...

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invites you to our

# BUSINESS MEMBER APPRECIATION NIGHT

APRIL 21 | 5:30-8:00PM | VISALIA CONVENTION CENTER



The Rawhide and Tipper

The Rawhide (and Tipper) were proud to be honored by Assemblyman Devon Mathis with an official resolution in Sacramento, which saluted the ballclub's 70th Anniversary, and the great work the club does in the community. Our thanks to Mr. Mathis for this tremendous honor! We're so proud of our team and our town!

The Tulare County Farm Bureau welcomes a new administrative coordinator, Susan Bueno to the team, Susan began in February and will be a front office lead receptionist and support staff member to the organization.

Ronald McDonald House Charities Central Valley has appointed Kent Karsevar, Ed.D. as its Executive Director effective February 1, 2016. Kent Karsevar most recently served as Director of Development for the College of Social Sciences at Fresno State.

It is with much excitement, and a little sadness too, that we congratulate Donny Baarns on his new venture with the Class AAA Omaha Storm Chasers! Donny has been the voice of the Rawhide since 2008 and we cannot speak highly enough of his talent and tremendous contributions to the ball club over the years. He will definitely be missed by all of the Rawhide family! Good luck Donny!

Wish Upon a Star would like to congratulate Board Member Bill Diltz, who was recently promoted to Sergeant in the Visalia Police Department.

ACT for Women & Girls would like to say congratulations to our very own Facilitator of the Year!!!! Congratulations, Michelle! Your ACT family loves you!

Bank of the Sierra recently announced the hire of Molly Peterson as Ag Loan Officer for the Bank's Ag Credit Center. In this position, Molly will be responsible for managing agricultural loans, which includes interviewing applicants, collecting necessary information, and approving loan requests.

DMI Agency received an ADDY Award of GOLD for our submission of the printed Sequoia Visitors Guide. The ADDYS are one of the most stringent creative competitions in the US - and we're very excited to have won a GOLD. The online version received a Bronze, which we were also delighted about.



DMI Agency

Guide now forwards to the district competition in San Francisco. There, we'll be competing against a much larger market (Northern California including the Bay Area and Sacramento). District winners move on to the Nationals in June.



CSET staff including our very own Deputy Director, Carla Calhoun, were featured in a nationwide video featuring industry professionals discussing progressive ways of implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

After undergoing a rigorous on-site survey in December 2015, Family HealthCare Network has received news that it achieved two Gold Seals of Approval® by The Joint Commission by demonstrating compliance with The Joint Commission's national standards

for health care quality and safety in ambulatory care organizations, and as a Primary Care Medical Home (PCMH). FHCN has been accredited by The Joint Commission for its ambulatory care program since 1997 and has since been successfully re-accredited.

The Tulare County Farm Bureau announced the 2016 Calendar Art Winners at an event held in celebration of National Ag Week at the Tulare County Board of Supervisors office. Congratulations to all this year's winners! Art calendars now available at the Farm Bureau office in Visalia.



We are so very proud of our newest graduating class of sworn-in Court Appointed Special Advocates!! Congratulations and welcome to our CASA family!! If you are interested in making a difference for the innocent children who are victims of abuse and neglect and would like to learn more please call Carrie at CASA of Tulare County 626-4007. Our next Training will start on Tuesday, March 29th. The first step is to attend an orientation every Monday at 5:30pm or Thursday's at noon at the CASA office 1146 N. Chinowth St. Visalia, CA 93291..



Foodlink of Tulare County: Our need for a new refrigerated truck just took a huge step closer to becoming a reality! Thank you to our partners at SaveMart for their generous support. This will go a long way toward helping us improve our ability to deliver food throughout the community!

THE LAW AT WORK

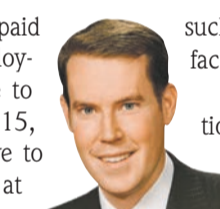
Can you ask your employees to provide a doctor's note? Maybe not!

On September 10, 2014, Governor Brown signed a paid sick leave bill, AB 1522, into law, requiring California employers to provide paid sick leave to employees. Starting in July 2015, California employers now have to provide their employees with at least three paid sick leave days per year. So it's now the law - if you have employees, they get sick time.

The requirement that employees provide a "doctor's note" when they take sick time is nothing new. Such a policy is no doubt common among California employers. But is it legal? How's this for a lawyerly answer: Maybe.

A few months back, the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), the agency tasked with enforcing California's Paid Sick Leave law, put out some online training dealing with the new sick time law. In this training the DIR stated that requiring employees to provide doctors' notes could be construed as unlawful interference with their statutory right to the leave. Notice the use of the word "could be."

Many have asked the DIR for clarification - one attorney emailed the DIR directly about the issue, and the DIR's response was that since there's nothing explicit in the law that allows employers to ask employees to provide doctors' notes, conditioning an employee's leave on the employee providing such a note "can arguably interfere with the employee's use of paid sick leave." The DIR has vowed to continue analyzing whether denying leave for failure to provide



Brett T. Abbott  
Gubler & Abbott LLP

such a note constitutes retaliation "according to the unique facts of [each] case."

So, employers have to ask themselves the following question: "Is it worth it to require my employees to provide a doctor's note when they take a sick leave?" The reason to require a note is to prevent abuse, i.e. to ensure that sick days are only taken when employees are sick. Yet the risk of an employee's claim of retaliation of interference with their leave is very real indeed. So, is it worth it? That, dear reader, is up to you. But know that the

law is unclear on this point, with the only guiding light coming from an agency that loves using words like "can" and "may" instead of "will" and "shall." So until the DIR says unequivocally one way or another, understand that your "doctor's note" requirement could result in headaches for you.

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 LLP (bta@thecalifornialawyers.com). For specific employment law advice or other legal assistance, contact Gubler & Abbott LLP, (559) 625-9600, 1110 N. Chinowith St., Visalia, CA 93291 (www.thecalifornialawyers.com). Read Mr. Abbott's blog on employment law issues at http://work-law.blogspot.com.

Visalia Unified Launches New Linked Learning Academies

Over the last two years, VUSD has been implementing Linked Learning academies across the district. Linked Learning is an educational approach which combines relevant academics, rigorous career themed course, work-based learning and targeted student supports. These components are delivered in an academy or school within a school model, where students move in a cohort for 3 of their 6 classes each day. The curriculum is integrated around the career theme and students are exposed to integrated projects and work-based learning experience like guest speaker, field trips and job shadowing experiences.

This year, VUSD has 6 Linked Learning academies open across the district and just under 500 students enrolled. Next year, VUSD will be opening four additional academies for a total of ten. The new academies are Law and Justice, Business and Finance, First Responders and the Sports Therapy Orthopedic Neuromuscular Gains Academy (STRONG).



Bill Davis  
Director,  
CTE Education

In January, VUSD hosted all 2,100 middle school students at the LJ Williams Theater to view academy videos that showcase the theme of the academy and provide students with background information to make the best choice possible. In the evenings, VUSD hosted parent information nights in English and Spanish to answer parent questions and help families make the best choices for their students. The online application closed in mid-February, with approximately 25% of VUSD 8th graders choosing a Linked Learning Academy. To date, VUSD has over 600 students who have applied for and been accepted into a Linked Learning academy.

The implementation of Linked Learning is a true partnership between VUSD and the community of Visalia. VUSD could not implement 10 academies in 3 years without the support of organizations like the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, Visalia Economic Development Corporation and Visalia Partners in Education. If you would like to learn more about Linked Learning, please contact Bill Davis, Director of CTE at (559)730-7510.

Visalia Unified School District 2015-2016 Linked Learning Academies				
Golden West	Mount Whitney	Redwood	El Diamante	Visalia Technical Early College
Academy Of Engineering & Ag Manufacturing	Academy of Health Sciences	Academy of Architecture & Engineering	Academy of Media Arts	Academy of Agriculture Bio-Science & Technology
Academy of Business & Finance	Academy of Computer Science	Academy of Law & Justice	Academy of STRONG	
Academy of First Responders				

BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner

Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner is the Executive Director at Community Services Employment Training (CSET). She has been a member of the Chamber Board of Directors for 2.5 years.

**Why is it important to be a Chamber member?**

The Chamber serves as an advocate for local businesses and can connect businesses with valuable information to grow their services and strengthen their business practices. Membership in the chamber also provides businesses a credible place to hear about legislation that may affect the business landscape or may create new opportunities they may want to explore.

**What brought you to Visalia?**

I grew up in the area and was excited to come home to live after college.

**What is your favorite thing about your job/company?**

CSET is an amazing place to work where individuals share a passion for making a difference in our community and are committed to facilitating quality programs. The work is fast paced and I enjoy the diversity of individuals and partners we have the opportunity to partner with to explore new projects and positively impact our community in the process.

**What do you like to do when you are not working?**

When I am not working I enjoy reading and catching up on movies I may have missed. I especially like hanging out with family and friends.

**What is your favorite place to go in Visalia when you are not working?**

I love our coffee shops and restaurants. I believe we are very blessed in Visalia to have so many wonderful establishments that are locally owned.

**What is your best advice for young professionals?**

Take advantage of the wonderful leadership programs in our community. These opportunities allow you to meet new people, develop your professional skills and help you explore opportunities to become civically engaged in our community.

**What is your favorite quote?**

"When you help a child today, you write the history of tomorrow" By Father Flanagan, the founder of Boys Town.

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

Vernon Spence

Vernon Spence is a Transaction Coordinator for Zeeb Commercial Real Estate and has been with the company for just over a year.

Zeeb Commercial Real Estate handles all types of transactions of non-residential property. From a small one year office lease, to the sale

of a multimillion dollar industrial facility. CoStar a national commercial real estate listing and information internet platform described Zeeb as having the "Lion's Share," of the market. Martin R Zeeb opened the doors of the business in 1986 as is known to be the local authority on the market.

**What are some of the ways you'd recommend getting involved/working with/partnering with the Chamber?**

I think attending mixers is the best way to meet people and establish connections and relationships with likeminded professionals. After initially meeting people becoming an ambassador or joining a committee is the best way to contribute first hand.

**What has Chamber Membership meant for your company?**

The membership to the chamber of commerce was a crucial part of when Marty first opened his business over 30 years ago. Almost all of the brokers here in the office have contributed time, and in exchange made professional relationships at some time or another.

**The best part of Visalia is .....**

Visalia has many amazing aspects, my personal favorite is the downtown. I believe that in a country being consumed by corporations, having a thriving downtown where locally owned restaurants and shops thrive is something to embrace and be proud of.

**What is your favorite local charity/non-profit?**

Visalia Country Center Rotary is my favorite club hands down. Not only do I get to see great friends on a weekly basis, but I get to contribute to making my community, and the world as a whole a better place. Not only financially, but I also mentor troubled youth, and participate in projects to improve Visalia.



a california *health+* center  
Your Health. Our Mission.

**Family Healthcare Network President & CEO Heads To Washington, DC For Honor In Community Health Advocacy**

Visalia, CA – Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) President & CEO Kerry Hydash will head to Washington, DC on March 17, 2016 where she will be honored by The National



Hydash

Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) with the NACHC Grassroots MPV Award. The award recognizes the dedication and energetic efforts by advocates to generate public and political support for the strength and expansion of America's Health Centers. Hydash will be presented the MVP award at the Annual NACHC Policy and Issues Forum at the nation's capital - the largest gathering of community health center leaders in the nation.

Meeting with and engaging local Members of Congress in the organization's advocacy campaign, FHCN President & CEO Kerry Hydash played a key role garnering local and statewide support for historic passing of the H.R.2 bill in 2015. In April of 2015, the U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly to pass H.R. 2 – a bill that includes mandatory funding for the Health Centers Program, and protects access to health services for the 23 million people in the U.S. who depend on their care.

FHCN's advocacy team also rallied the local community's support by collecting "Access is the Answer Petition Signatures." FHCN's advocacy efforts led to more than 16,000 petition signatures collected locally - a figure achieved by only one other health center in the U.S., and the most in California.

The NACHC Grassroots MVP Award is named in honor of the late Elizabeth K. (Betsey) Cooke whose constant effort and unflagging persistence as an advocate for America's Health Centers and Health Center patients set an example for all Health Center Advocates to follow.



**Sound Alliance and Vocal Union from BYU-Idaho to perform**

Sound Alliance and Vocal Union from Brigham Young University-Idaho will perform in Visalia at the Fox Theatre on April 13 at 7:00 pm as part of their spring tour through California and Nevada.

The performance is general seating, no ticket required. Attendees 17 and under are free. For those 18 and up, there is a suggested donation of \$5 at the door. Net proceeds will be donated to Visalia Rescue Mission.

Sound Alliance and Vocal Union combine to create an instrumental and vocal concert that will entertain and inspire audiences of all ages. The groups present a multi-faceted program with both ensembles interwoven to perform inspiring vocal and instrumental jazz selections.

Visalia Vice Mayor Warren Gubler is quick to express his enthusiasm about this jazz-inspired event. He says, "I'm looking forward to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

# CalChamber Takes Positions on Upcoming Initiatives

The California Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors recently took positions on the following initiatives proposed for the November 2016 ballot.

## Drug Pricing

*Oppose: California Drug Price Relief Act*

If approved by voters, the California Drug Price Relief Act would prohibit the state and all programs where any state entity is the ultimate payer, from agreeing to pay more for a prescription drug than the lowest price paid by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).



The CalChamber Board voted to oppose this measure because it will increase what most Californians must pay for health care premiums and out-of-pocket health care costs by shifting the cost of prescription drugs from government purchasers to private payers, including employers.

*Status:* The initiative is eligible for the November ballot.

## Minimum Wage/Sick Leave

*Oppose: Minimum Wage. Increases and Future Adjustments. Additional Paid Sick Leave Mandate*

The CalChamber Board voted to oppose two proposed initiatives that would increase the minimum wage. In opposing the measures, the Board pointed out that increasing the minimum wage will add to the cumulative costs already experienced by California employers, including high personal income taxes, high sales tax rates, medical costs, workers' compensation costs, litigation costs, energy costs, and water costs/restrictions.

- One of the measures proposes to increase the minimum wage by \$1 a year starting on January 1, 2017, until the minimum wage reaches \$15 an hour in 2021.

*Status:* The measure is pending signature verification by the Secretary of State. A random sample on March 1 projected supporters would have just 79% of the required number of signatures.

- The second minimum wage proposal calls for increasing the minimum wage at a rate that depends on the size of the employer and adding more paid sick days for employees, which is an especially significant burden on small employers.

In opposing the measure, the Board noted that in addition to concerns over cumulative costs, employers still are struggling with implementing the current paid sick leave mandate adopted with AB 1522 (2014). The Board also expressed concerns over increasing state costs under the measure.

*Status:* Proponents have until July 5 to submit no fewer than 365,880 signatures to place the measure on the November ballot. The initiative has reached the 25% signature threshold.



## Legislature Transparency

*Support: California Legislature Transparency Act*

The initiative aims to ensure legislative proceedings are conducted fairly and openly, and enable the public to observe and share what is happening in the Legislature so citizens may more fully participate in the political process.

The measure makes the following changes to legislative rules and responsibilities:

- Requires the Legislature to ensure audiovisual recording of all public proceedings are publicly accessible on the Internet within 24 hours and archived for at least 20 years thereafter.
- Requires the cost of complying with the initiative to be funded within the Legislature's existing budget.
- Allows the recording of public proceedings to be used for any legitimate purpose.
- Prohibits the Legislature from voting on a bill until it has been published online in its final form for at least 72 hours. This prohibition includes exceptions for emergencies, such as natural disasters.

The CalChamber Board supports the California Legislature Transparency Act because requiring the Legislature to post each bill online, in its final form, for at least 72 hours before voting on it would give the legislators time to review the legislation, hear from their constituents, and be held accountable for the laws they pass.

*Status:* Supporters have gathered 25% of the 585,407 signatures required for an initiative constitutional amendment. The deadline for submitting signatures is June 13. The initiative is sponsored by Charles T. Munger Jr.

## HEALTHCARE NOTE

# Weathering war, change and growing pains

Visalia Medical Clinic is proud to celebrate its 75th anniversary this year, and as we look back we are reminded of the courage and foresight required to run a medical practice and to survive change.

The practice began in 1941, just before Pearl Harbor, with three physicians in a city of 8,000. Drs. I. M. Lipson, William S. Neal and J. H. Brady recognized the need for additional physicians and began building a new office in 1942, on Floral Street near where the present Kaweah Delta District Hospital now stands.

They built their new clinic, only to have their physicians pulled into war. Dr. Neal served in Public Health on the Navajo Indian Reservation and Dr. Brady served in the U.S. Naval Reserve and later spent 20 months in a field hospital in the South Pacific.

This active duty would continue for three years, leaving Dr. Lipson to keep the practice going, with the help of interim associates.

The physicians-turned-service-members came home to Visalia in 1946 to officially form the partnership and return to building their practice. In the ensuing years, VMC has moved and expanded multiple times, the make-up of the partnership has changed, and the



**Rick Strid**  
CEO  
Visalia Medical Clinic

number of support staff members has grown.

Through all of the challenges and changes, the core mission never changed: to stay focused on the core purpose of the practice, to take care of the patient and to stay abreast of changes to the benefit of the patient.

A key component of the changes at VMC has been the ongoing investment in the latest in medical technology, from the first X-ray machine to today's ultra-sophisticated CT and ultrasound scans – and the latest change, our affiliation with the new Kaweah Delta Medical Foundation.

Today, VMC has a group of over 50 physician-owners who daily balance the good of the patient, the good of the practice and the needs of a community that now exceeds 130,000 people.

We pray that we'll never have to endure another World War, but Visalia is a better community thanks to the endurance and commitment of our founding physicians.

Change is unavoidable, but learning to use change as an opportunity to grow and become stronger is a lesson for all businesses.



# Save the Date: June 16, 2016

**Visalia Convention Center**  
**5:30 - 9:00 pm**

*Help the Chamber celebrate the individuals and businesses that make living in Visalia great!*

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

# Visalia Young Entrepreneurs Academy Students WOW Judges and Receive Funding to Launch New Businesses



On Thursday, March 17th, student entrepreneurs took to the stage to present their business plans before a panel of local leaders of industry. The students, now acting as CEO's of their own company and dressed as young professionals, really wowed the crowd!

8 students in grades 8 through 12 representing 6 businesses from the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) in Visalia had five minutes to pitch their business plans to prominent local members of the business community during the program's annual YEA! Investor Panel Event (Shark Tank). Based on the appeal and merit of the students' plans and presentations, representatives from companies like Suncrest Bank, Sterling & Smith Funeral Home and USA Printing determined the amount of start-up funds to allocate to each business. Below is a list of the student businesses and the funding they were awarded.

- VEPO** - Carmen Gallegos was awarded \$1,100
- Fruit Frenzy** - Mary Vinzon and Jude Grijalva was awarded \$700.00
- Chocolate Wonders** - Ambar Melendez was awarded \$525.00
- MTS Soaps** - Miguel Trejo was awarded \$525.00
- Classic Cup** - Robert Perry was awarded \$500.00
- Gerges Referral Service** - Jad & Alec Gerges was awarded \$350.00

The Investor Panel was comprised of prominent local business people, including:  
 Judy Fussel, COO, Buckman-Mitchell Insurance  
 Diane Martin Soares, President, Amdal In-Home Care  
 Lupe Garcia, Branch Manager, Suncrest Bank  
 Tony Benevento, President, ServiceMaster by Benevento  
 Shan Ravin, President, USA Printing & Graphics  
 Ronald Meyers, Sterling & Smith Funeral Homes

In addition to the start-up funding USA Printing & Graphics awarded six prize packages. Each package included printed business cards, The top three packages included promotional flyers, and the top two packages included a promotional banner. After listening to all of the presentations, Shan Ravin Owner of USA Printing and Graphics was so impressed with the caliber of the business pitches, he decided to upgrade the first place prize which went to Carmen Gallegos and her company VEPO to include a kiosk in his store where she will be able to sell her reusable water bottles.

The participating investors selected VEPO, a business created by 13 year old 8th grader Carmen Gallegos, to move onto the 2016 Saunders Scholars Semi Finals Competition. The Semi Finals will be held, May 5-7th in Rochester NY. Carmen will compete against more than 100 student businesses from across the county. VEPO will compete for thousands of dollars in college scholarships, a fast-track application pass to apply to be on ABC's Shark Tank, and an all-expenses paid trip to attend America's Small Business Summit in Washington, DC courtesy of the United States Chamber of Commerce.

In just one month each of the participating students will launch their new businesses at the 2016 Visalia Chamber of Commerce Business Member Appreciation event. Each business will have a booth at the event where they will be able to network and sell their new products to the public. Over the next four weeks students will file for tax id numbers, file fictitious business names and begin to put their marketing plan into action. For more information on the Business Member Appreciation event go to [www.visaliachamber.org](http://www.visaliachamber.org)



## Ronald McDonald House Charities Central Valley Appoints Kent Karsevar, Ed.D as Executive Director

Ronald McDonald House Charities Central Valley has appointed Kent Karsevar, Ed.D. as its Executive Director effective February 1, 2016. Kent Karsevar most recently served as Director of Development for the College of Social Sciences at Fresno State. While at Fresno State during the past 8 years, Kent was asked to take on additional Director of Development roles with the College of Science and Mathematics and the Lyles College of Engineering during Fresno State's first comprehensive campaign; which ended in 2013 and raised \$214 million dollars. Also, during his time at Fresno State, Kent Karsevar received a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership from the Kremen School of Education. Kent's doctoral dissertation was recognized internationally and awarded the 2013 John Grenzebach Research Award in Philanthropy for Educational Advancement by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and the Giving USA Foundation.

Said Kent, "I am excited to embrace the opportunities that the Ronald McDonald House Charities Central Valley has in store in the immediate future while also looking forward, and I am deeply honored to be a part of such a great organization."

Said Luanne Crater-Ragsdale, Ronald McDonald House Board President, "Kent Karsevar is an excellent match for this position and a strong asset to the Ronald McDonald House. He will be integral part in helping to execute the mission of the Ronald McDonald House, which includes expanding the House in the next couple of years."

To learn more about RMHC and its work, visit [www.rmhccv.org](http://www.rmhccv.org) or [www.facebook.com/RMHCCentralValley](http://www.facebook.com/RMHCCentralValley).

# Leadership Visalia Launches Water Conservation Project

It is no secret that California is in one of the most severe droughts in our state's history and we need to conserve and reduce our demand for water. When we conserve water, we can stretch our supplies further, put less pressure on sewage treatment facilities, and conserve energy. There are many statewide and local efforts to educate the public about water conservation, including some educational tools for kids, but it's not enough. Water conservation needs to be so engrained in our youth that it becomes second nature and they form water-conscious habits that will continue into adulthood.

The Leadership Visalia Class of 2015-2016 has developed our class project to help educate our youth about water conservation. While

water is a hot topic in our community, the majority of conservation education focuses on landscaping and outdoor use. Now, we're taking it inside the house.

In addition, focusing on the youth in our community, gives longevity to the project. Now, not only are they in the best stage of their lives to absorb new information, they are also the best advocates to educate their parents. In the words of one class member, "if my daughter keeps bugging me to turn off the faucet when brushing my teeth, I'm eventually going to do it so that I don't disappoint her."

To achieve this goal, the class is building three portable demonstration stations that will allow children to immediately see the impact. Each unit is equipped with sinks, faucets, and water jugs encased in Plexiglas to clearly show participants how much water gets used during simple tasks such as brushing teeth or washing hands. Participants can even compete head-to-head to see who can use less water while accomplishing the same goal.

Leadership Visalia has partnered with Pro-Youth Heart and ImagineU Children's Museum to demonstrate water conservation techniques to youth throughout Visalia. Leadership class members will provide demonstration in the spring of 2016. Beginning in the summer of 2016, staff and volunteers will take over demonstration and use these units to incorporate water conservation awareness into their curriculum for years to come.

This project would not be possible without the support of our sponsors: Cal Water, KRC Safety, Kaweah Delta Hospital, Educational Employees Credit Union, Visalia Breakfast Lions, Visalia Breakfast Rotary.



Leadership Visalia Student construct water conservation exhibit to be shared with Pro-Youth Heart and ImagineU Children's Museum

## VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Behind the Scenes

As interim superintendent, I am working to become knowledgeable of all the divisions within the district. Many of these divisions I know from working with them as a school administrator: Curriculum and Instruction, Student Services, Assessment, Health Services, Special Education, and Career Technical Education. As a school administrator, I am familiar also with the work done within our Human Resources division. But there are folks doing important work in our district that are easily overlooked—even though their work is critical to our daily operation. So I'd like to take a few minutes to recognize the importance of the folks working in our Administrative Services division as I deepen my appreciation for their role.

Making school happen every day requires a lot of skilled work. Getting kids to school on buses is the responsibility of our Transportation division. Bus drivers are the first Visalia Unified staff members that kids who ride buses to school see, and it is important that they be greeted cheerfully and piloted safely to school. Additionally, the ride to and from school requires that our mechanics ensure that our kids step onto safe and efficient buses.

When kids get to school, the grounds need to be clean and safe, and our Custodial and Grounds staff makes that happen. These folks take care of a wide range of things, from mowing lawns to taking care of small technical details that keep schools working. Our Maintenance staff is key when it comes to having school facilities that are safe



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

*"Making school happen every day requires a lot of skilled work."*

and functional. Heating, cooling, lighting, plumbing and many, many other things are attended to quickly and efficiently by our skilled maintenance staff. And I suggest that our most overlooked folks are the ones whose work would be most visible if it weren't done well: the night-time custodial crews who clean classrooms and offices are critical in providing an environment that supports learning at high levels.

Kids that are hungry struggle to learn, and our Nutritional Services staff does a great job making sure that healthy snacks and meals are available to kids, and served by folks that offer up a smile and encouragement. Education in the 21st century requires access to computers and other devices, and our Technological Services folks are constantly at work keeping our computers, network, and communication systems operating. Materials that support teachers and instruction are duplicated in-house by our recently upgraded Printing Department. And perhaps farthest behind the curtain are the people working in our Budgeting, Finance, Purchasing, Payroll, and Business Information Systems Departments who keep our business logistics, supplies and materials flowing smoothly.

We have lots of folks who are outstanding backstage performers who support kids by supporting the work of teachers and schools. I hope that bringing their role to the front for just a bit helps us all appreciate what they do for our kids.



## Labor Law Compliance Series Stop Harassment Seminar

Lamp Liter Inn  
 Thursday, April 27, 2016  
 7:30 - 10 am  
**Breakfast Included**

**Pre-Registration: \$35 for Members; \$50 for Non Members**  
**At the door: \$45 for Members; \$55 for Non-Members**

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED**  
**For Registration: Call 559.734.5876**

<http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/calendar/2016-04-01>



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## CLIP & SAVE

## CALENDAR - APRIL 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					Leadership Visalia Golf Tournament Valley Oaks Golf Course 12:01 start	2
3	4 Visalia City Council Meeting	5	6 Identity Theft Seminar Brandman University 9:00 am	7	8	9
10	11	12 Government Affairs Meeting Buckman-Mitchell Office 7:15 am	13	14	15	16
17	18 Visalia City Council Meeting	19	20	21 Business Member Appreciation Night Visalia Convention Center 5:30 pm	22	23
24	25	26 Business After Hours Rabobank 5:30-7:30pm	27 Stop Harassment Workshop Lamp Liter Inn 7:30 am	28 Ambassador Breakfast Visalia First Assembly Church 8:00am	29	30

## Updated FEHA Regulations

Written by Patrick Moody, Barsamian & Moody

Beginning April 1, 2016, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act's ("FEHA") updated regulations will take effect. The FEHA is a California law that protects employees from facing discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in the workplace based on a variety of legally protected characteristics or status. The FEHA generally applies to all California employers with five or more full or part-time employees.

The updated FEHA expands discrimination and harassment protections, lays out specific requirements for dissemination of the anti-discrimination and harassment policy, complaint procedures, and training, and establishes a clearer standard of what constitutes discrimination, among other things. The FEHA also now specifically states that any employee who engages in the harassment of a co-worker, whether they are supervisor or general employee, will be held personally liable to the victim of the harassment.

Under the updated regulations, harassment and discrimination protections are expanded to include not only direct and indirect hire employees and apprentices, but also unpaid interns, volunteers, and persons performing services to an employer pursuant to a contract. The FEHA now specifically states that discrimination will be established if a preponderance of the evidence shows that a protected classification was used as a substantial motivating factor in the denial of an employment benefit to any of these individuals.

The FEHA now requires employers to have discrimination, harassment, and retaliation policies that are in writing, list all current protected classifications covered under the FEHA, indicate that the FEHA prohibits coworkers, third parties, supervisors and managers from engaging in the prohibited conduct, and establish a complaint process for employees

reporting harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

The discrimination, harassment, and retaliation policy must be disseminated by either printing and distributing it to all employees with an acknowledgment form that the employee signs and returns, sending them via e-mail with an acknowledgment return form that the employee signs and returns, posting them on a company intranet that tracks and confirms employees have received and read the policy, discussing them at an orientation, or providing them in some other way that ensures the employee receives and understands the policy.

The FEHA also now specifically defines the protected classifications of "Gender Expression" and "Gender Identity." "Gender Expression" means a person's gender-related appearance or behavior, whether or not stereotypically associated with the person's sex at birth, while "Gender Identity" means a person's identification as male, female, a gender different from the

person's sex at birth, or transgender. Both of these classifications are now included as part of the prohibition against discrimination based on an individual's sex.

### What This Means for Employers:

The updated regulations to the FEHA cover a wide breadth of topics and add many new requirements for employers. The new complaint procedures and expanded protections will require employers to review and update their existing company policies to incorporate the changes to the law. All of the updates and amendments to the FEHA are too numerous to list in this article, so employers should review the updates or contact an attorney to ensure their practices and policies are up to date and in compliance. The final version of the updated FEHA can be viewed by visiting <http://www.dfeh.ca.gov/res/docs/FEHC/FinalText.pdf>.



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### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

attending this quality production at the historic Fox Theater with my family, not only for the entertainment value, but for the opportunity to help raise funds for a worthy cause, the Visalia Rescue Mission."

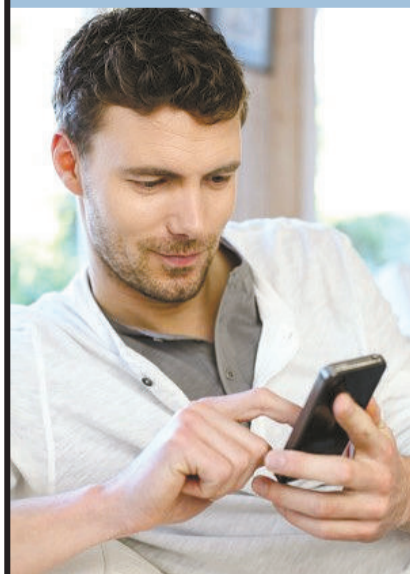
Sound Alliance is composed of 17 musicians selected through a highly competitive audition process. Their repertoire ranges from the artistic to the "just-for-the-fun-of-it." Currently, they are playing music from the "Great American Songbook" such as the Army Jazz Ambassadors/Eric Richards arrangement of "Blue Moon" with vocal solo, the California surf rock tune "The Jazz Police" by Gordon Goodwin, and original compositions like director Dr. Mark Watkins' blues shuffle "I Got Nothin' But Nothin'."

Vocal Union, an ensemble of 12 singers, performs a variety of styles which feature the tight harmonies of vocal jazz in a performance of popular, big band and classic jazz tunes. Audiences are often spellbound by the precision harmonies, vocal blend and energy of the ensemble as they perform some of the very best in vocal jazz.

The goal of both performing groups is to uplift audiences through quality music that inspires, entertains and leaves one feeling good. The upbeat nature of their program will appeal to audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

While in Visalia on April 13, Sound Alliance and Vocal Union have also scheduled student workshops at Redwood High School for jazz band and concert choir classes.

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