



# Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **MARCH 8:**  
**Government Affairs Committee Meeting**  
 Buckman-Mitchell Board Room  
 7:15 am
- **MARCH 15: Candidate Forum Tulare County Board of Supervisors District 1**  
 Presented by: The Visalia Chamber of Commerce  
 210 Cafe  
 7:30 - 9:00 am  
 \$10.00 - for Chamber Members  
 \$20.00 - for Non-Members  
 Registration is requested: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/details/candidate-forum-3467>
- **MARCH 15: Business After Hours Mixer**  
 Express Employment  
 4002 So. Demaree Suite B  
 5:30 - 7:30 pm
- **MARCH 17: Candidate Forum Tulare County Board of Supervisors District 3**  
 Presented by: The Visalia Chamber of Commerce  
 210 Cafe  
 7:30 - 9:00 am  
 \$10.00 - for Chamber Members  
 \$20.00 - for Non-Members  
 Registration is requested: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/details/candidate-forum-3468>
- **MARCH 17: Young Entrepreneurs Academy Investor Panel**  
 4930 W. Kaweah Court  
 5:30 - 8:00 pm
- **MARCH 23: Paying Less for College: Tips for Business and Farm Owners**  
 Presented by: McDonald & Associates  
 Fresno Pacific University - Visalia Campus  
 9:00 - 10:00 am  
 Free for Chamber Members  
 \$10.00 for non-members  
 Registration is requested: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/details/financial-aid-workshop-for-business-owners-3458>
- **MARCH 25, 2016 Chamber Ambassador Breakfast Meeting**  
 Visalia First Assembly Church  
 8:00 am



**We Invite you to Explore in 2016!**

- Spectacular South Africa, September 22 - October 5, 2016
- Colors of New England, October 11-18, 2016

Collette Vacations CST#2006706-20  
 Chamber Explorations CST#2048841-40  
 Grand Circle Travel CST #2041626-40  
 Jet Vacations  
 For more information go to [www.visaliachamber.org](http://www.visaliachamber.org)

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

## Made in Visalia: Brewbakers, Locally Owned and Brewed



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

There is something special about walking around downtown and knowing that the restaurants and shops are locally owned and operated by hard working locals. Brewbakers Brewing Company is one of those special businesses in Visalia that can boast not only local ownership, but their staple product, craft beer, is made right here in downtown Visalia. Rod & Randy Dyer opened Brewbakers Brewing Company in 1999 with the intention of creating a downtown brewpub where you can get delicious food and locally brewed craft beer.

Rod and Randy Dyer are 'local boys', they grew up in Three Rivers, went to school in Woodlake and are now settled with their own families in Three Rivers. Both Rod and Randy worked in the restaurant business for many years and knew that they wanted to merge their knowledge of the restaurant business and their passion for home brewing to start their own business. In addition to restaurant experience, Rod went to school at Fresno State and studied wine making. The brothers decided that the combination of experience, education and passion would be the keys to their success.

Today Brewbakers is proud to be the only brewery in Visalia. "We are asked on a regular basis if our brewing equipment is real or if it is just decoration" noted Stephanie Dyer. "I am always excited to tell our customers that our equipment is fully operational and that Rod and Randy use the equipment to brew at least four times a week". In addition to craft beer, Brewbakers also brews their own rootbeer, and at any given time they have at least three different house brewed sodas on hand. Dyer also noted that Brewbakers works to keep as any many aspects of the business local as possible. They bank local, purchase produce from the local farmers market, they sell Lindcove Lemonade, use local honey in their beer and purchase their sausage from Exeter meats who makes their beer banger sausage with Brewbakers stout.



**BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT**

For the Dyers it is important that they support local businesses and the community as much as possible. Brewbakers regularly donates to local festivals, service clubs and other non-profit organizations. They also try to support local school fundraisers whenever possible in order to give back to the community and people who have continued to support their business.

Over the last 17 years Brewbakers has grown drastically and now employs 41 people. They credit their success to their loyal customers. Dyer stated "We could not have made it for 17 years without our loyal customers, many are of them are like family and we look forward to seeing them throughout the week. We have also created some great relationships with many of the local hotels and campgrounds and we regularly have international tourists stopping in for a meal and drink." Being in downtown has also been a big part of the success of the business. "Downtown Visalia is the jewel of the valley, and being located in a historically significant building attracts tourists and locals alike." Brewbakers is in one of the oldest buildings downtown and the restaurant is located in the old Visalia Saddle Company site. Today there is a plaque outside of the restaurant explaining the significance of the building.

The Dyers plan to expand their business in order to lay the groundwork for future success. Brewbakers has recently launched a new Happy Hour appetizer menu that gives customers more options for early evening drinks and food. They also want to open a tap room in the future where they can focus on brewing and selling their craft beer. Plans for the tap room are currently on hold while the City of Visalia reviews suggested zoning ordinance changes that would allow for breweries to open tap rooms that do not have a restaurant component. While they wait to see what the City decides to do, Brewbakers plans to continue to use local resources to provide a family friendly pub, and to celebrate and carry on the tradition of brewing delicious craft beer right in the heart of Visalia.

## 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.

#### ■ VWR INTERNATIONAL, LLC

**Distribution**  
 (559) 730-2400  
 vwr.com

#### ■ THE VISALIA PLAYERS

**Entertainment & Recreation**  
 (559) 734-3900  
 www.visaliaplayers.org

### Renewing Members

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

- Acclaim Credit Technologies
- Central Valley Real Estate, LLC
- Owens Valley Career Development Center
- Visalia Sunset Rotary
- Wish Upon A Star
- Walmart Neighborhood Market
- Carl Nelson Insurance Agency\*
- American Cancer Society
- Bank of the Sierra\*
- Donaghy Sales, LLC\*
- Farmer's Fury Winery\*

### ■ Littler Mendelson

- Visalia Unified Teachers Association
- Oral E. Micham, Inc.\*
- Assistance League of Visalia
- First Presbyterian Church
- Sequoia Cigar Company
- Principal Financial Group
- The Orosco Group
- Kaweah Container Inc
- Personnel Solutions Unlimited, INC.
- Tachi Palace Hotel & Casino
- Soroptimist International of Visalia Inc.

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

## VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS

- Business-Government
- Business Relations
- Promoting Community
- Strong Local Economy

VISALIA TIMES-DELTA • February 27, 2016

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## Affordable Care Act Update presented by SHRM of Tulare/Kings

“That Blooming ACA: Do I have to AND Why?”

Come and learn about What's New, What's Changing, What's Trending & What You Need to Do about it.

**Tuesday, March 8th, 2016**

**11:00 - 1:10 pm**

**Visalia Marriott 300 S. Court St.**

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

**About the Speaker:** Michael Young is the founder of 20/20 Employee Benefits, LLC. He is a Principal Employee Benefits Consultant and Covered CA trained advisor to companies and individuals.

Michael's insurance career began at Valley Financial Group in Exeter in 2008 with his long-time friend and business partner, Garrett German; a financial advisor. Although Michael specializes in Employee Benefits, he also has extensive experience with individual health insurance, Medicare, Short term and International health insurance, Medi-Cal, and Life Insurance.

In 2015, Michael and Garrett renamed their companies 20/20 Employee Benefits and 20/20 Financial Advisors. Michael Young was raised in Visalia, CA and is not related to the football player.

You can visit his website at: [www.healthdentalvision.com](http://www.healthdentalvision.com)

## Bank of the Sierra Reports Big Totals for 2015 Grants



Community bank gave back in 2015 by donating \$175,000 to local non-profits through its Sierra Grant Program

PORTERVILLE, CA — Bank of the Sierra announced that 2015 saw over \$175,000 distributed to a variety of non-profit organizations throughout the 6 counties it serves. Each quarter the Bank awarded approximately 15 organizations with a grant, the amount of which was determined individually by the specific needs of the organization. Most organizations received a grant of \$1,000 to \$5,000.

The grant program partners with traditional non-profits, public school districts, and other local organizations. The types of projects that benefitted from the grants ranged widely, including initiatives to help underprivileged children and the elderly, housing and community building projects, cultural and educational initiatives, and environmental preservation efforts.

Kevin McPhail, Bank President and CEO, explained his appreciation for the grant program and the organizations that benefit from it: “The Sierra Grant program has been an important part of how Bank of the Sierra engages with the areas it serves. We're happy to assist with the projects these organizations introduce, and we're always grateful to hear of the many ways community members are making a difference.”

About the Sierra Grant Program

Since its inception in 2004 the Sierra Grant Program has been responsible for donating over a million dollars to organizations that improve local communities. Non-profits who wish to apply for a Sierra Grant can pick up an instructional brochure at any Bank of the Sierra branch, or visit the bank's web site at [www.bankofthesierra.com/resources/sierra\\_grant\\_program](http://www.bankofthesierra.com/resources/sierra_grant_program).

### About this publication ...

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

# Focusing on the Essentials...

“What holds capable driven people from breaking through to the next level?” Greg McKeown asked the crowded room at a conference I recently attended. His question was interesting but not nearly as interesting as his answer. After fielding some incorrect answers from conference attendees, McKeown paused looked around the room and simply said “Success”. The room, which moments earlier had been eagerly shouting answers to his question now seemed stunned. They must have been reeling, thinking the same thing I was ‘How could success, the thing I strive for, prevent me from being successful? And was he really implying that successful people can't be successful?’ McKeown went on to explain a common cycle. A successful person does well, people recognize the success, more opportunities follow, the person does more but focuses less on what they originally did that made them successful and the diverted attention ultimately causes failure. He applied this cycle to companies. A strong company diversifies, which leads to mission creep, then substandard products or services follow and now the original strength of the company is long forgotten. Their success caused their failure. Unfortunately it was all too easy to point to many examples like this. The better way to succeed, the bestselling author argued, was essentialism, doing what is essential and nothing else. Focusing on mission, what made

you great, not wasting your energy or decision making power and passion on something that doesn't propel you forward.



**Gail Zurek**  
President & CEO  
Visalia Chamber  
of Commerce

It seems simple but its practice isn't easy. I bought McKeown's book *Essentialism, The Disciplined Pursuit of Less* and have begun applying his ideas not only to my own life, but the direction of your Chamber. We need our Chamber to continue to be successful. The Chamber is about to break through to another level, so it seems even more important that we focus on what is essential to chamber work. We've wrestled with the idea as a staff, sent a survey to our members asking for feedback, and the Board of Directors will be gathering this month to develop a strategic plan. We take serving our members seriously and I am

excited to evaluate the outcomes of these steps.

Reflection and evaluation is never easy. It is much easier to claim you don't have the time. The reality is that the evaluation process is critical to success, so critical that lack of time cannot be an excuse. As much as you need the Chamber to be successful; We need you and your business to be successful. When your business thrives, our community benefits, and we all become stronger.



## Colors of New England

**October 11 - October 18, 2016**

**\$2999 per person (double occupancy)**

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce invites you to experience the rich history and culture of New England. The eight-day trip through the Northeastern United States is a chance to enjoy the charming and historically rich states in all the glory of their beautiful fall colors. The trip will take place from October 11 to October 18, 2016. The tour includes several amenities including round-trip airfare from Fresno Air Terminal as well as hotels and 10 meals.



The getaway begins with a two-night stay in the heart of Boston, Massachusetts. While there, enjoy a sightseeing tour of historic locations and visit the Faneuil Hall Marketplace to see street performers and local handiwork. The tour then moves to Vermont, the “Green Mountain State.” Visit Woodstock and the 165 foot deep, mile-long Quechee Gorge before continuing on to Stowe. In Stowe, take a trip to the Cold Hollow Cider Mill to see how apples are made into cider using a rack and cloth press. Later, enjoy a tour of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory and taste samples of the famous treat.

The tour then moves to New Hampshire. Bask in the gorgeous New England countryside as you travel through the White Mountains on your way to North Conway. Along the way, tour the farm at the Rocks Estate, home to the North

Conway Conservation & Education Center, to learn about maple sugaring in the region. Enjoy a leisurely cruise on Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire's largest lake, before visiting Wolfeboro. The final stage of the tour takes you to Boothbay Harbor in Maine. Enjoy another cruise through the Harbor to view local wildlife, incredible coastlines, and picturesque lighthouses, culminating in a dinner of fresh native lobster. The next day travel through Kennebunkport, and visit former President George H. W. Bush's summer home, Walker's Point, on the way back to the Boston airport.

Booking your unforgettable trip to New England before April 11, 2016, allows you to take advantage of lower prices.

### Highlights:

- Boston
- Woodstock
- Quechee Gorge
- Stowe
- Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory

- Rocks Estate
- North Conway
- Lake Winnepesaukee
- Kancamagus Highway
- Boothbay Harbor
- Lobster Dinner

### Features:

- 8 days
- 10 meals
- Roundtrip airfare from Fresno

## GROUNDBREAKING • GRAND OPENING • RIBBON CUTTING • CEREMONIES



Ribbon Cutting

**Kaweah Delta  
Impella Mobile Learning Lab**  
West Side of the Acequia Wing • 559-624-2000



Ribbon Cutting

**Central Valley Healthy Snacks**  
209 W. Main St. • 559-624-1233

## Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program Kicks Off

Tax season is upon us and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is up and running in the communities of Visalia, Porterville, Tulare and Cutler-Orosi. The program kicked off its first Saturday of filing returns on February 6th and will continue to offer the free service to

Tulare County residents throughout tax season. Almost 800 tax returns were prepared by volunteers in the first three Saturdays of the 2016 operation!

This year is especially exciting for the VITA Program due to the roll out of the first ever California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC). This tax credit will boost income for nearly 600,000 eligible families in the state of California, including

over 15,000 families in Tulare County alone! CalEITC offers working families a chance to get ahead on unpaid bills, delayed car repairs, education costs and beyond. More information on the California Earned Income Tax Credit can be found online at [www.CalEITC4Me.org](http://www.CalEITC4Me.org).

Tax preparation services continue every Saturday through April 9 from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at all four sites. Mobile services are also available to residents unable to reach a VITA location. For more information and a listing of locations, please visit the VITA Program online at [www.CSET.org/VITA](http://www.CSET.org/VITA).



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**The Visalia Young Professionals Network** presented Family Services of Tulare County with their annual non-profit donation on February 17th during the winter mixer hosted by the Lunch Box. The Visalia Young Professionals Network encourages all young professionals to get involved and give back to their community.



Young Professional Network

**Tulare County Health & Human Services** Environmental Health Manager Nilsa Gonzalez presented food safety awards to 301 food locations around Tulare County. Restaurants receive a certificate that they can display as recognition for their achievement. To receive the award, restaurants must receive high scores on three consecutive checks during 2015.



Dr. Nathan Loeffler.

**Dr. Schneider** and Staff are pleased to announce the addition of a great young dentist - and Lindsay native - to their team: Dr. Nathan Loeffler. His values and commitment to providing great care is in line with what patients have come to expect from the office, making him a welcome addition!



Happy Birthday to **Rotary**. Rotary celebrated their 111 anniversary this month. Thank you to all of the members and supporters that work to improve the lives of others.

Congratulations to the **Visalia Parks and Rec Department** on a sold out Father Daughter Dance.

The **Visalia Chamber of Commerce** is so proud of our President & CEO Gail Zurek. This month she was awarded Woman of the Year for the 26th Assembly District. She will be representing our district in Sacramento on March 14th at the California Legislative Women's Caucus annual "Woman of the Year" celebration.



Visalia Chamber of Commerce Staff with Assemblyman Devin Mathis

**BOARD SPOTLIGHT**

**BJ Perch**



BJ Perch is the Vice President of BJ Perch Construction Inc. He has been a Chamber board member for 2 1/2 years.

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

BJ Perch

The people. I work with very talented people including consultants, clients and in our company staff. Every project has different challenges and we address these together as a team and we always seem to have fun along the way.

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

I enjoy watching my kids sports, camping, and riding motorcycles.

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

My house. I put in so many hours at work and being involved with community organizations that being at home with my family is what I look forward to.

**What was your favorite book that you read in the last 12 months and why?**

Unfortunately, I spend more time reading contracts and other business related documents than reading for pleasure. The only book I read last year was *The Immortal Nicholas* by Glenn Beck. This was a Christmas gift that I enjoyed very much.

**What is your favorite charity or local cause?**

There are so many great organizations in our community it difficult to choose one. I try to give my time and support to multiple organizations but I do make an effort to support causes that have a positive impact on the youth of our community. One such organization I have long supported is Pro-Youth.

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

Don't be afraid to ask questions. When taking on a new task or challenge I recommend seeking the most qualified person you know and get their input.

**THE LAW AT WORK**

**Are Employee Handbooks Really That Important? YES!**

The only constant in business is change. No matter how much we like keeping our best workers, new employees come and go. Thus, it can be difficult keeping employees informed of relevant laws and a company's culture, policies, and procedures. That's where the employee handbook comes in – a good employee handbook can be invaluable in helping to resolve these problems.



**Brett Abbott**  
Partner, Gubler & Abbott, LLP

**Preserving the at-will relationship**

The biggest concern with employee handbooks is that the handbook will alter the "at-will" nature of employment. California courts have held that policies contained in employee handbooks can create contractual obligations (Foley v. Interactive Data Corp. (1988) 47 Cal.3d 654, 681).

To avoid this unwanted change in the "at-will" status of employees, many employers include disclaimers stating that the handbook does not create a legally enforceable agreement. At-will disclaimers should be prominent – on the cover or first page of the handbook. The language should state clearly that the handbook is not a contract with employees and it expresses only "guidelines" regarding the company's "policies." Any disclaimer should also expressly state that, with the exception of the at-will policy, all other the policies in the handbook can be modified by the employer at any time without a written revision of the handbook.

**Conclusion**

This article is not meant to provide an exhaustive analysis of employee handbooks. Rather, the goal of this article is to illustrate the benefits, and potential dangers, associated with them. While a thorough, accurate employee handbook does take time to create and modify, employers will find the benefits far exceed the effort involved.

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

**Advantages of using an employee handbook**

There are numerous benefits to using an employee handbook. Handbooks commit employers to deal with situations in specific ways. They provide for consistency of treatment and reduce the risk of unlawful discrimination claims. Employee handbooks reduce confusion about unstated policies and benefits – less confusion results in fewer lawsuits and morale problems. Handbooks can help eliminate arguments of "arbitrary termination" and can assist in resolving complaints. Perhaps most importantly, employee handbooks aid new employees in understanding a company's policies and culture.

**Concerns regarding the use of employee handbooks**

Despite the numerous benefits of implementing an employee handbook, there are some concerns for employers. If an employer fails to abide by policies provided for in a handbook, it may be more likely to be found liable to an aggrieved employee. Employee handbooks are fodder for employee rights attorneys who look for progressive discipline policies that have not been followed or for other deviations from the handbook. There can also be some significant time and expense involved in creating an accurate, thorough employee handbook. Handbooks also require updating as employment laws and the company change.

**VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Career Technical Education Continues to Evolve**



Four years ago, Superintendent Craig Wheaton authored an article titled, "Not your Dad's Shop Class!" At that time, he outlined how career technical education programs (what we used to call "vocational" or "shop" programs) had grown to be more relevant for students and our local community. Since that article, career technical education has been the focus of some extraordinary activity, and that focus has had great impact on the options available to students in Visalia.



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

Since 2012, a revolution of sorts has occurred within career technical education (CTE) at the state and federal level. The changes that have occurred have taken two forms. First, there is greater emphasis than ever on providing students a well-rounded education that contains a CTE component. You may have heard the phrase, "college and career ready" to describe the expectations for graduates in the 21st century. This means that every high school graduate must possess skills that provide them with the ability to enter the workforce in a field that offers the potential for promotion, or to enter an educational program (meaning an advanced training program or college) without need for remediation. Second, support for CTE programs has grown dramatically through increases in school funding and also targeted grants. This allows for the support, expansion, and development of courses that prepare students to be college and career ready.

In Visalia Unified, we have been able to take advantage of both

of these developments in powerful ways. We have been very competitive in the CTE grant arena. As a member of the Tulare-Kings County Linked Learning Consortium, we were able to receive two grants through the California Career Pathways Trust. The first grant allows us to create our ten Linked Learning Academies. These academies provide career-themed high school programs that combine core academic and CTE programs for cohorts of 60 to 120 students each. As I write this, eighth-grade students across our district are being offered the opportunity to take part in a Linked Learning Academy during their high school years. The second grant allows us to redesign and support our existing traditional CTE pathways to ensure that students who engage in these programs receive experiences that are relevant to their needs and interests, and that are also validated by local industry. Further, we have been successful in obtaining a Career Technical Education Incentive Grant that will be used to modernize our CTE facilities and programs, further supporting our overall CTE program.

*It is exciting to know that we are able to provide strong, improved, and modern programs well into the 21st century*

Visalia Unified has a long history of supporting career technical education. As a CTE instructor, I came to Visalia in the 1980's because of the strong programs offered in this district. It is exciting to know that we are able to provide strong, improved, and modern programs well into the 21st century that follow the traditional CTE pathways as well as innovative approaches to CTE through our Linked Learning Academies. The future is bright indeed for providing our students with an education that supports college and career readiness.

**Kaweah Delta Recognized as Top 10% in Nation for General Surgery**

Kaweah Delta Health Care District Achieves the Healthgrades 2016 General Surgery Excellence Award

Visalia, CA (February 1, 2016) – General Surgery at Kaweah Delta Medical Center is among the top 10% in the nation as measured by lowest risk-adjusted complications, according to this year's evaluation from Healthgrades, the leading online resource helping consumers make informed decisions in order to find the right doctor, the right hospital, and the right care. Every year Healthgrades evaluates hospital performance at nearly 4,500 hospitals nationwide for 33 of the most common inpatient procedures and conditions.

The achievement is part of findings in the *Healthgrades 2016 Report to the Nation*. The new report demonstrates how clinical performance continues to differ dramatically between hospitals both nationally and regionally. This variation in care has a significant impact on health outcomes. For example, from 2012 through 2014, if all hospitals as a group, performed similarly to hospitals receiving 5 stars as a group, on average 222,392 lives could potentially have been saved and 166,086 complications could potentially have been avoided. A 5-star rating indicates that Kaweah Delta's clinical outcomes are statistically significantly better than expected when treating the condition or conducting the procedure being evaluated.

Kaweah Delta not only performs at a 5-star level in general surgery, it outperforms other hospitals in the nation in general surgery and as a result has been recognized with the 2016 Healthgrades General Surgery Excellence Award™.

The General Surgery Excellence Award™ recognizes hospitals for superior outcomes in bowel obstruction treatment, colorectal surgeries, gallbladder removal, esophageal/stomach surgeries, and small intestine surgeries. Patients who have these procedures at these nationally recognized hospitals have a lower risk of dying or experiencing a complication during their hospital stay.

For its analysis, Healthgrades evaluated approximately 40 million Medicare inpatient records for nearly 4,500 short-term acute care hospitals nationwide, and assessed hospital performance relative to each of 33 common conditions and procedures. Healthgrades recognizes a hospital's quality achievements for cohort-specific performance, specialty area performance, and overall clinical quality. Individual procedure or condition cohorts are designated as 5 star (statistically significantly better than expected), 3 star (not statistically different from expected), and 1 star (statistically significantly worse than expected) categories. The complete *Healthgrades 2016 Report to the Nation* with detailed cohort-specific outcomes data, hospital-specific quality achievements, and detailed study methodology, can be found at [www.healthgrades.com/quality](http://www.healthgrades.com/quality).

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## Small Business Services Expand in Central California

The University of California, Merced Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network is pleased to announce a new partnership agreement with the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) at Fresno State, to expand SBDC services.



Eduardo Gonzalez

Eduardo Gonzalez has been named as the new, full-time Fresno State SBDC Director. Gonzalez joined OCED in 2011 as a program manager. He was instrumental in helping OCED earn the national Excellence in Community-Connected Campus Award for its San Joaquin Valley Rural Development Center.

"Mr. Gonzalez has the diversified background combined with the experience of small business ownership that brings a depth of talent and abilities to serve as the new director," said Diane Howerton, Regional Director of the UC Merced SBDC.

"We are very excited about this expanded partnership with UC Merced SBDC," explained OCED Executive Director Mike Dozier. "We have partnered on numerous successful SBDC projects and events in the past six years. SBDC is a natural fit with the vision and mission of our office. We are familiar with the other outstanding centers in the UC Merced SBDC region and look forward to being part of their future success."

During the past five years, the Fresno State SBDC generated more than \$43 million in new capital, aided in the creation or retention of 714 jobs with 258 new and expanding businesses and served 2,505 clients with 13,205 consulting hours. For additional information, please contact: Eduardo Gonzalez, Fresno State SBDC, (559) 278-0542 or edgonzalez@csufresno.edu.

## HEALTHCARE NOTE Family HealthCare Network Leader in Prenatal Health Care

Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) has been at the forefront of expanding access to affordable, comprehensive health services in the Central Valley for nearly four decades. During this period, FHCN has developed one of the largest prenatal health care programs in Visalia, and its surrounding areas. With more than 3,100 babies delivered, and over 50,000 prenatal visits provided by FHCN's team of providers in the last year, our prenatal program is the largest of its kind amongst Federally Qualified Health Centers in California, and the third largest in the nation.

FHCN's prenatal program uses a multidisciplinary approach to provide a full continuum of care by addressing the family planning and reproductive health of women, as well as, pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. Measured against the national and state average, year after year FHCN patients continue to receive prenatal care that exceeds standards for clinical outcome measures including the reduction of low and very low birth weight, and obtaining the crucial first prenatal care visit within the first trimester of pregnancy.

With a team of 17 obstetricians and gynecologists (OB-GYN) and family practice/OBs, our prenatal program has consistently recruited and sustains highly qualified physicians to practice locally. The medical provider shortage hits areas like the Central



By Kerry Hydash,  
MPA

President & CEO  
Family HealthCare Network

Valley particularly hard, and attracting skilled OB-GYNs to the area is an added value of our program and plays an important role in our efforts to address this shortage.

In addition to OB-GYNs, our diverse prenatal team also includes nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, dental providers, health educators, lactation specialists, childbirth educators, nutritionists, and behavioral health specialists. Each prenatal patient at FHCN is also assigned a navigator health coach who provides individualized case management, and serves as a trusted source for guidance and support. Patients receive additional support through group education

classes. FHCN's Healthy Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Lactation courses, provide a supportive atmosphere for learning and sharing, and empower participants to choose healthy behaviors during their pregnancy.

Our prenatal program strives to engage women who are at risk in prenatal health care early in their pregnancy and provide ongoing care, education, and support throughout their pregnancy and postpartum care. From quality health care, to health education, counseling and guidance, our comprehensive approach to prenatal care is setting the stage for healthier futures in Visalia, and the Central Valley.

## Cal Water gives customers tour of its Visalia water system



VISALIA – California Water Service (Cal Water) recently took almost 50 customers on a tour of its Visalia water system to educate them on how the utility provides high-quality water to customers every time they turn on the tap.

Cal Water extended the invitation to all customers in its Visalia

district, and almost 50 people decided to take advantage of the opportunity to learn about Cal Water's operation in Visalia and see, first-hand, why Visalia has the most reliable urban water system in the Central Valley.

Cal Water Visalia employees accompanied the customers on a bus tour that visited three utility sites during the two-hour event. Customers learned about Cal Water's prudent and needed investments in Visalia's water system infrastructure including wells, pumps, water-quality treatment and testing, and water mains.

"From 2010 to 2014, Cal Water invested almost \$47 million in water system improvements," said Jim Smith, director of the Visalia district. "That's about \$345,000 per million gallons of water produced, which is significantly higher than other nearby communities."

Cal Water serves about 132,200 people through 43,400 service connections in Visalia. The company has provided water service in the area since 1926. Additional information may be obtained online at [www.calwater.com](http://www.calwater.com).

### LEADERSHIP VISALIA

## Leadership Visalia Learns about Health and Fitness

Written by TJ Tackett,  
Buckman-Mitchell Insurance  
Leadership Visalia Class Member

A book I once read said that when you make your list of things to do for the day always knock out the toughest task first. It seems to me that the Leadership Visalia day session planners, Paula Biewer, Miguel A. Pacheco and Scott McNamara, took this philosophy to heart when planning the Healthcare session. The first topic of the day was Health Insurance and the Affordable Care Act. JoeAnna Todd & Judy Fussel from Buckman-Mitchell Inc. presented an engaging and informative presentation on a very complex yet personal subject that affects everyone.

The Class then went to California Fitness Academy and met with owner, Justin Levine. Justin explained the importance of listening to our bodies, and that we should try to be intuitive with ourselves, and then he told us a little bit about his story. Then like any good trainer he got our entire class in on the action, we got down on the astro-turf for some low impact exercises including planks and leg lifts.

After we recovered from our workout session with Justin the class went to the Sequoia Regional Cancer Center where the mood of the class quickly changed from laughing and joking to somber as we began to discuss the topic of hospice care. Susan Buscagila of Kaweah Delta Hospice delved into the history of hospice and explained that hospice is a philosophy of care, focusing on comfort not cure. One of the goals is to preserve dignity for patients. Susan noted that last year volunteers provided 5,500 hours of service, companionship, music, pet therapy and massage services.

Our class is very thankful to Kaweah Delta Health Care District for providing lunch from Pita Kabob. As we dug into our food Alana Unger, a Dietician for KDHCDC educated the class on what a dietician really does. Since we were meeting with a dietician, I made sure to load up a lot of veggies and even managed to avoid eating the chocolate cake. As lunch ended we were privileged to hear from Lindsay Mann, CEO of Kaweah Delta Health Care District, who gave an excellent presentation on the Acute Care Hospital Expansion. It was



Leadership Visalia Students spent time learning how to work out to keep themselves healthy at California Fitness Academy

clear he was excited about providing the area with a top of the line new acute care hospital by 2030. We ended our time at Kaweah Delta with Barbara Mayeda, Private Home Care Director who charmed the class with candy. She explained that Kaweah Delta employs 170 people who provide 24/7 care to patients in their homes.

The last part of the day was spent at Family HealthCare Network. I was surprised to walk into a room full of books for children, educational toys and fun pictures on the wall. It was great to see a waiting room that was so inviting. Family HealthCare Network focuses on the health of the entire person, and their goal is to be proactive, taking healthcare out of the Dr.'s office and into the home. As a full service healthcare provider, every department communicates with each other in a matter of hours or days rather than weeks or months. We met with CEO Kerry Hydash who provided statistics about the organization and how it compares to similar entities across the nation. I was touched as Kerry showed us pictures of her young children and said that she choose to raise her children here because she feels she can make the most difference in her hometown.

We reconvened at the offices of Buckman-Mitchell were we recapped what we learned during the day. We learned so much and had a great time doing it! I will remember this day for a long time and I am happy to say that I have eaten several salads since.



### March 15 Candidate Forum Tulare County Board of Supervisors District 1

Presented by: The Visalia Chamber of  
Commerce

210 Cafe

7:30 - 9:00 am

\$10.00 - for Chamber Members

\$20.00 - for Non-Members

Registration is requested: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/details/candidate-forum-3467>

### March 17 Candidate Forum Tulare County Board of Supervisors District 3

Presented by: The Visalia Chamber of  
Commerce

210 Cafe

7:30 - 9:00 am

\$10.00 - for Chamber Members

\$20.00 - for Non-Members

Registration is requested: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/details/candidate-forum-3468>

### March 23 Paying less for College: Tips for Business and Farm Owners

Presented by: McDonald & Associates

Fresno Pacific University - Visalia Campus

9:00 - 10:00 am

Free for Chamber Members

\$10.00 for non-members

Registration is requested: <http://www.visaliachamber.org/events/details/financial-aid-workshop-for-business-owners-3458>

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## Young Entrepreneurs to Participate in Local Shark Tank Event



Written by Nicola Wissler,  
Visalia Chamber of Commerce

Around the country Young Entrepreneurs will be participating in local Shark Tank events where they will pitch their big ideas in hopes of receiving start-up funding. On March 17th the Visalia Chamber of Commerce will host the 2016 Investor Panel event for 10 local student businesses. Each business will have 5 minutes to impress the panel of judges with their idea, research and presentation skills. The Investor Panel will have \$5,000 to invest into the start-up businesses.

For the last 5 months 13 students from Visalia and Tulare have met once a week and put in more than 50 hours of research and work into creating plans for 10 new businesses. This year's businesses include:

**Cre8** – A series of graphic novels for children that are fantasy/science fiction. They hope the book series will be able to expand to include action figures and maybe even television.

**REACH** – An after school mentoring/tutoring program for elementary and middle school students

**VEPO** – A specially designed reusable water bottle, they donate portions of the proceeds to drought relief efforts in the Valley.

**Gerges Referral Service** – A service for students to find part time/project work in local business offices.

**Chocolate Wonders** – Sells handmade chocolate treats including suckers, covered cookies and truffles.

**Stack Error** – A website that will allow students to post class notes, chat live with classmates and teachers about assignments and for teachers to post information.

**Classic Cup** – A mobile coffee cart that will focus on sporting events and special events.

**MTS Soaps** – Creates handmade soaps with herbal oils and fragrances.

**Fruit Frenzy** – A company that sells premade and custom order fruit salad bowls.

**3+Beef** – A company that sells custom cuts of beef directly to the consumer.

This year the student businesses will be judged by:  
Judy Fussel, President/COO, Buckman-Mitchel Insurance  
Tony Benevento, Owner, ServiceMaster by Benevento  
Lupe Garcia, Branch Manager, Suncrest Bank  
Deanne Martin-Soares, Owner, Amdal In-Home Care  
Ronald Smith, Owner, Sterling & Smith Funeral Home



Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

### Peña Planetarium offers evening and matinee shows in March

**Peña Planetarium in the Tulare County Office of Education Planetarium & Science Center, 11535 Avenue 264, Visalia**

*Visalia* – During the months of February and March, the Sam B. Peña Planetarium, operated by the Tulare County Office of Education, will offer visitors a choice of two evening shows and two matinee shows, ideal for younger audiences.

#### EVENING SHOWS

**March 11, 7:00 p.m. – *Wildest Weather in the Solar System***

Join us on a spectacular journey to witness the most beautiful, powerful, and mysterious weather phenomena in the solar system. From a storm the size of a 100-megaton hydrogen bomb to a 400-year-old hurricane to a dust tempest that could engulf entire planets, you'll be glad you live on Earth!

#### MATINEE SHOWS

**March 23, 1:30 p.m. – *Perfect Little Planet***

Discover our solar system through a new set of eyes - a family from another star system seeking the perfect vacation spot. Fly over the surface of Pluto, dive over the ice cliffs of Miranda, sail through the rings of Saturn, feel the lightning storms at Jupiter, and walk on the surface of Mars. This is the solar system journey for space travelers of all ages.

**March 23, 3:00 p.m. – *Two Small Pieces of Glass: The Amazing Telescope***

See how telescopes work and how the largest observatories in the world use these instruments to explore the mysteries of the universe.

The new Planetarium & Science Center is located at 11535 Avenue 264 in Visalia, on the southwest corner of Mooney Boulevard and Avenue 264. Tickets are available at the Planetarium office only after 5:00 p.m. on the day of the evening show and **only after 12:00 p.m. on the day of the matinees.** Tickets are \$4 for adults and \$3 for children 11 and under. Visitors may choose to see one or both matinees listed on the schedule. However, each show requires the purchase of a separate ticket. Children must be accompanied by an adult. **No late seating is offered once the planetarium doors close.** For information, call (559) 737-6334.

For more information about the Peña Planetarium, visit [www.tcoe.org/planetarium](http://www.tcoe.org/planetarium).



## EEOC Proposes Collecting Pay Data from W-2s

FEBRUARY 5, 2016  
GAIL CECCHETTINI WHALEY FEDERAL UPDATE



In a significant departure from existing requirements, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recently announced that it is seeking to require large employers to report pay data to the agency, including aggregate information from employee W-2s. The EEOC is proposing to revise the federal EEO-1 report to include collecting pay data from employers with more than 100 employees. The EEOC said it is seeking the new data to assist in identifying possible pay discrimination in the workplace.

EEOC Chair Jenny Yang stated that the proposal will provide the EEOC with insight into "pay disparities across industries and occupations" and will allow the EEOC "to more effectively focus investigations, assess complaints of discrimination, and identify existing pay disparities that may warrant further examination." According to Yang, pay discrimination goes undetected due to lack of information about what people are paid.

The EEOC announced the proposal at a White House equal pay event commemorating the seventh anniversary of the federal Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

#### Background

Federal law requires all private employers with 100 or more employees to file the EEO-1 report annually. In addition, all federal government contractors and subcontractors with a contract of \$50,000 or more and with 50 or more employees must file EEO-1 reports.

Currently, the survey requires company employment data to be categorized by race/ethnicity, gender and job category.

#### Proposal

#### Under the proposal:

- Employers, including federal contractors, with 100 or more employees would submit pay data beginning September 30, 2017.

- Employers would identify employees' total W-2 earnings for a 12-month period and would provide aggregate information on the EEO-1

- Employers would not provide individual employee information but would instead provide information by job category and demographic group using 12 "pay bands" (salary ranges).

- Federal contractors with 50-99 employees would continue to report race, sex and ethnicity data, but would not report pay data.

Example from the EEOC: An employer would report on the EEO-1 that it employs 10 African American men who are Craft Workers in the second pay band (\$19,240-\$24,439).

The EEOC also provided a questions and answers document, a small business fact sheet and a link to the proposed EEO-1 form, accessible at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

#### Comments Due by April 1

Comments on the proposed notice must be submitted by April 1, 2016. Comments can be submitted online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Follow the instructions on the website for submitting comments.

Submit written comments to: Bernadette Wilson, Acting Executive Officer, Executive Secretariat, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 131 M Street NE., Washington, D.C. 20507.

A public hearing on the comments also will be held at a place and time to be announced.

#### Focus on Fair Pay

As the EEOC's proposal demonstrates, the issue of fair pay continues to be a focus at both the state and federal levels.

California's Fair Pay Act was recently amended to revise and expand previous state law protections (Labor Code Section 1197.5). The amendments, effective January 1, 2016, also reinforced provisions intended to address "pay secrecy." Employers can't prohibit employees from discussing wages.

CalChamber members can find more information about California law on the HR Library's Fair Pay Act page.



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**CALENDAR - MARCH 2016**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	Visalia City Council Meeting	Government Affairs Meeting Buckman-Mitchell Office 7:15 am	9	10	11	12
13	14	Candidate Forum 7:30 am 210 Café Business After Hours Express Employment 5:30 - 7:30pm	16	Candidate Forum 7:30 am 210 Café YEA Investor Panel 5:30 pm 4930 W. Kaweah	18	19
20	21 Visalia City Council Meeting	22	Paying Less for College 9:00 am, Fresno Pacific University	25 Ambassador Breakfast 8:00am Visalia First Assembly Church	26	27
27	28	29	30	31		

**Transformation in Progress: Central Valley Manufacturers and Teachers Committed to Student Success**



Advanced Manufacturing 101 - Central Valley Initiative is creating a collaborative of high schools, adult schools, community colleges, workforce development boards, industry partners and other



key stakeholders that is committed to improving Advanced Manufacturing Education in the Central Valley by providing teachers/administrators opportunities to:

- Learn the technical education and skills requirements directly from the Manufacturers through tours of manufacturing plants and focus group meetings with the plant leadership and staff.
- Obtain professional development/training to provide education and training to students that is needed for technical careers in the advanced manufacturing industry.

Phase III of Advanced Manufacturing 101 - Central Valley Initiative was comprised of the tours of two manufacturing plants located in the Visalia Industrial Park: BlueScope Buildings and Serpa.

Mr. Joel Williams, Plant Manager of BlueScope Buildings welcomed teachers and provided an overview of the plant operations and went on to say, "you are the blood lines for our companies." Mr. Williams was referring to the importance in the role teachers' play in educating the workforce that impacts manufacturers' ability to produce high quality products. Maintenance Mechanics continue to surface as the one of the top in demand occupations and employers continue to struggle to find qualified employees who are educated and trained to understand and troubleshoot highly automated systems.

After the BlueScope Buildings plant tour, teachers had the opportunity to tour Serpa. Serpa is a manufacturer of high-quality machinery, and provides complete end-of-line packaging solutions by offering the most advanced technology and design in the industry.

It is great to have partners like PPG Industries, Conagra Foods, BlueScope Buildings, and Serpa who have opened up their doors to provide externships to teachers so that they have a good understanding of the skills gap that their local manufacturing industry is experiencing. With this understanding and connection with local employers, teachers are empowered to develop curriculum that addresses the skills gap, seek internships and job shadow opportunities for their students and assist students in making informative careers decisions.

Teachers and administrators who participated in Advanced Manufacturing 101 - Central Valley Initiative, Phase III:

- Tule Cardoza, Mt. Whitney High School, Visalia Unified School District

- Bill Davis, Visalia Unified School District
- Bob Rooney, Redwood High School, Visalia Unified School District
- Zach Brown, Ed Diamante High School, Visalia Unified School District
- John Boydston, Lindsay High School, Lindsay Unified School District
- Brian Emerson, Center for Advanced Research and Technology, Clovis/Fresno Unified School Districts
- Michael Niehoff, College of the Sequoias
- Ken Whitworth, Orosi High School, Cutler-Orosi High Joint Unified School District
- Stephen Stevenson, Tulare Adult School, Tulare Joint Unified School District
- Charles Abee, Woodlake High School, Woodlake Unified School District
- Andreas Fernandes, Mission Oaks High School, Tulare Joint Unified School District
- Ronald Sa, Kings Canyon High School, Kings Canyon Unified School District
- Jeremy Ward, Duncan Polytechnic High School
- Katie Navarette, Duncan Polytechnic High School
- Dough Urabe, Duncan Polytechnic High School
- Carlos Reis, Visalia Early Technical Education High School, Visalia Unified School District
- Gurinder Sangha, DSN - Advanced Manufacturing

Please note: Advanced Manufacturing 101 - Central Valley Initiative, Phase IV is scheduled for March 30, 2016. High School and Community College teachers and administrators from all across the Central Valley are welcome to register and participate in the upcoming tours of American Incorporated, and Pregis. (For more information about the Advanced Manufacturing



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