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AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Vol. 42, No. 5 | May 2021

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EVENTS

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR DATES

Coffee & Conversation with Your Chamber CEO-Facebook Live

Time: 8 a.m.

MAY 18

YP Talks

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: YPN Facebook Live

MAY 27

Ambassador Monthly Meeting

Time: 8 a.m.

Location: Visalia First

JUNE 10

Loyal to Local Awards

Time: TBD

Location: Facebook Live

TRAVEL WITH US

JULY 16-24, 2021

The Colorado Rockies

OCTOBER 4-11, 2021

Colors of New England

OCTOBER 9-16, 2021

New England Rails & Trails

NOVEMBER 2-9, 2021

Irish Discovery

DECEMBER 3-8, 2021

Music Cities Christmas

DECEMBER 5-9, 2021

Santa Fe Holiday

JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 6, 2022

Tropical Costa Rica

FEBRUARY 15-24, 2022

Sunny Portugal

MARCH 6-20, 2022

Colors of Morocco

APRIL 19-26, 2022

Highlights of Italy's Amalfi Coast

MAY 18, 2022

JUNE 7 & 15, 2022

AUGUST 16, 2022

SEPTEMBER 13 & 21, 2022

Oberammergau Passion

Play Germany & Austria

JUNE 11-17, 2022

Landscapes & Lighthouses of Coastal Maine

OCTOBER 4-12, 2022

Normandy, Paris & the Seine River Cruise



Travel provided by:

Collette Vacations
 CST #2006766-20

Mayflower Tours
 CST #2044099-20

Chamber Explorations
 CST #2048841-40

For more information, go to
www.visaliachamber.org/travel

Topograph emerges from merger of DMI Agency, 4Creeks Creative

The two long-time Visalia agencies will now merge under the newly formed Topograph LLC.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOPOGRAPH LLC

DMI Agency owner, Karen Tellalian (left) and new Topograph President, Publisher, CEO Eric Riley (right), announced that 4Creeks Creative acquired DMI last month creating the new Topograph company. Riley said the company will carry on with Lifestyle magazine, but offer more marketing options to clients.



On April 7, 2021 4Creeks Creative, a DBA of 4Creeks, Inc., and DMI Agency publicly announced the acquisition of DMI Agency and Lifestyle Magazine, effective March 17, 2021. The two Visalia-based marketing agencies will now merge under a single new company, Topograph LLC.

"I'm very excited about what this acquisition and new venture provides to our current and future clients," said Eric Riley, CEO/president at Topograph. "Both 4Creeks Creative and DMI Agency have

provided high-caliber marketing to this area for years. This merger allows us to strengthen our long-term client relationships with new services that will help our clients reach their marketing goals."

As part of the transaction, Topograph has also acquired Lifestyle Magazine, and will continue to operate the magazine with the same vision and content everyone has come to associate with the area's premier publication.

"As the new owner/publisher I am dedicated to continue the legacy of Lifestyle Magazine within our community. The magazine has served our area really well, and

I'm honored to be a part of carrying on this publication."

After nearly two decades of owning and operating an award-winning agency and publication, it is never an easy decision to turn over the reins. "It felt like the perfect time to sell to such a great group of local people with the experience and creative depth of 4Creeks Creative," said DMI Agency president, Karen Tellalian. "We talked with other firms interested in the purchase from outside the area, but none felt like the right fit for our clients and our staff until we met with Eric and the 4Creeks team."

See TOPOGRAPH on page 6

CITY UPDATE

Visalia ready to celebrate reopening

As local COVID-19 metrics continue to improve, we look forward to mid-June for the state of California to move "beyond the blueprint" on June 15.

If the state of California fully reopens the economy in mid-June, we'll be ready. While city operations have continued

throughout the pandemic, we were pleased to be able to bring the in-person event Dump On Us back (which will hold its next event on Saturday, May 15) and we're looking at additional opportunities as appropriate. Our parks and playgrounds are open, as are athletic fields for youth sports. Our Community Services Department is working to bring back summer programming and events, as well as the popular business competition event Corporate Games.

Across the community, events that have gone virtual are preparing to return, and we're looking forward to The Arts Consortium's First Friday tradition to come back to in-person in downtown Visalia. The 2021 Visalia Rawhide season is already underway, and the ballpark is buzzing once again. Mark your calendars for the 3rd of July fireworks celebration, as planning is underway now.

If your business or organization is ready to plan your own event or celebration that will be held in the public space or on city property, the city provides the special event process. Special event applications should be submitted at least two months prior to the event, with the process designed to ensure that your event is a success, while taking into consideration the protection of the pub-

See CELEBRATE on page 6

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Don't do it alone



Gail Zurek
 President and CEO
 Visalia Chamber

As business leaders, what used to work no longer does. The tried and true now seems foreign and ineffective. The pandemic has shifted leadership models, best practices and challenged even the most seasoned leaders. It is not easy to lead

in virtual environments, welcome staff back to in-person workplaces, and design spaces where customers feel safe and welcomed. As we begin to return to so many 'normal' activities, business leaders must reassess how their leadership works in a post-pandemic environment.

Many leaders are deciding which staff can work remotely and which staff should return to the workplace. The pandemic has made remote working more of a possibility for some businesses. In contrast, it has highlighted the need for team cohesiveness and the value of an onsite presence for others. Assessing if and which staff can continue to work remotely is new territory for so many. Those decisions lead to a whole host of new human resource issues and concerns, potential cost-saving areas, and can affect the direction of a business. There is not a post-pandemic playbook or a trusted older mentor who can recount when they welcomed staff back from a post-pandemic work at home environment. Leaders are left without the lessons and advice from those who have gone before them. Everyone returns to our 'normal' world at different times and in different ways. As they do, this return process is a challenge for leaders as well. Conversations about transitioning to in-person work environments while establishing new workplace norms leave leaders feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, and inadequate. Instead of returning refreshed and ready, many are returning feeling more exhausted than ever before.

We have a leadership crisis on our hands. Our business leaders are helping and doing more than they ever have before. They are tackling new and complex issues without the training, and support leaders need to be successful. Leaders are looking for answers. Leaders are craving training.

Impact Leadership Conference on April 21 was wildly successful. Giving space and time for leaders to connect and helped all to see they were not alone.

This is indeed a difficult time to lead, but we can be stronger together through our willingness to learn from others. There were many ah-ha moments of the conference, but at lunch, I had the opportunity to hear one attendee say to another, "I just needed to see other leaders, to know other people are wrestling with the same things I am. It's nice to see we're all in this together." We are in this together.

Impact is not the only place to learn these lessons. For over 30 years, Leadership Visalia has allowed leaders to explore their community on a deeper level, refine their leadership skills, and become better leaders in their workplaces. This year, despite many sessions being virtual, was no different. In fact, this year's class had to wrestle with conversations, topics and issues many others had not. I am proud of this year's class in preserving and ultimately becoming stronger leaders.

This year has pointed out that leadership is not for the faint of heart, but we need strong leaders more than ever. If you are a leader in crisis, you are not alone, and we are here for you. If you are overworked and don't have answers, we can help. If you have a leader on your team who needs more training, we are here for you. Leadership training is more important than ever before.

Leadership Visalia's application process for the 2021-2022 session just opened. This program, now more than ever, is critical to local leaders. If you know of someone who can benefit from the program, please nominate them. It's a wonderful feeling to be nominated. Send them to visaliachamber.org/leadership. Don't do leadership alone.

Disabled employees receive boost through \$250,000 EDD grant



While the economy is rebounding the Tulare County Workforce Investment Board is offering some help with new funding from the state's Employment Development Department.

Last week the EDD announced it awarded \$250,000 in Disability Employment Accelerator funds to the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) for its Access to Careers and Employment (ACE) partnership that provides career development and job opportunities for people with disabilities.

"These funds will help workers secure quality jobs in the post-pandemic labor market," said EDD director Rita Saenz.

The ACE project will address the high level of unemployment and poverty faced by people with disabilities (PWD) in Tulare County and ultimately lead participants into career pathways with lasting employment. An Integrated Resource Team comprising the local partners will work together to align resources, share information, provide a network of supportive services, and assist participants as they work to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment.

The ACE project will provide employment and training services, while emphasizing the use of distance learning and other technology-based methods to deliver services. This approach will help participants develop technology-based skills, which have proven crucial during the COVID-19 crisis, while protecting their health and safety as they receive program benefits. The project will help people harness their transferable skills, while focusing on solutions to employment challenges.

Using strategies to target Tulare County's high-demand industry sectors, partners will work with local businesses and industry leaders to develop work-based learning programs to help people with disabilities obtain and retain competitive, integrated employment.

"In order for the local economy to thrive, we need to ensure that every worker has a path to good jobs in key industries," said WIB executive director Adam Peck.

From April 2018 to March 2021, the WIB received similar funding to launch the Access to Careers and Employment project. To date the ACE project has helped 41 people with disabilities with job training opportunities including on-the-job training, the completion of Associate Degrees and assistance in finding unsubsidized employment.

The Access to Careers and Employment (ACE) project is a

See EDD GRANT on page 6

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Name: Lucilina and Mark Brackett
Company: Office Source 360 Office Supplies & Furniture
Title: Owners

Office Source 360 was started in Jan 2014 to provide quality service while distributing office supplies and furniture with 39 years of industry experience to share with our local/national customers. Lucilina and Mark Brackett, the owners/operators of Office Source 360, enjoy engaging customers to find the right solution for them. We provide office products, technology, Jan San, ink and toner, industrial supplies, sit stand products and in our furniture solutions we provide furniture design/layout, installation, relocations, reconfigurations services.

We are a family-owned and -operated business, the reward is our family gets to work together along with our staff to provide exceptional quality service to our customers that you cannot find at big box stores. Our pricing is competitive with competition; however, we love the challenge of being able to provide "contract" pricing where necessary in an instant when our customers make us aware of a substantial price difference.

We are a "traditional" office products dealer and what that means to our customers is we can answer or provide products from a single source for all your business needs. The big box stores are not able to compete with us in our procurement and speedy responses to customers.

Our web store can process your orders quickly and efficiently using cutting edge technology. Our professional web store technology provides a price comparison while shopping to notify you of your savings.

Office Source 360 is involved with the Exeter Chamber of Commerce as a past/present board member. Lucilina is an ambassador for both Exeter and Visalia chambers of commerce. Mark is currently president of Visalia Breakfast Rotary. VBR this year will donation to organizations, charities, and our local youth approximately \$107,000 through over 40 organizations.

The best part of working for Office Source 360 is providing solutions for our customers for the products and services we sell and providing quality service. However, the best part is working with family to overcome barriers/obstacles to doing business locally so that we don't lose sight of our most important strength which is to provide exceptional quality customer service at all times. We attend openings and other chamber-related events to engage with customers and simply meet people. People are the most interesting part of what we do, and we have to be able to engage with them on a level where we gain their trust and the chamber allows us this opportunity.

Office Source 360 is local, local and is 'engaged in your business success! We have our office and warehouse in Exeter and can provide quality customer services always and deliver solutions to your business in Tulare, Kings, Fresno and Kern counties. We are your local solution to "think local, buy local, be local." As a business owner certain business relationships/services/product simply can't be provided/sourced locally, however I can advise you that Office Source 360 Office Products and Furniture Solutions are consumed daily by all local businesses and can be purchased locally benefiting our local business community. We have discovered that business owners and managers want to buy locally, however they have not adequately directed their employee(s) to get the best possible pricing using a local business, so the person responsible for ordering simply shops for the best deals for many sources which ends up costing the business more in labor and opportunity costs keeping this person from accomplishing profit-driven responsibilities.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

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Editor Gail Zurek
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 Visit www.visaliachamber.org

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.

Business Connector Members:

- Lotus Fresno

RENEWING

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

Regional Members:

- California Water Service Company*

Community Investor Members:

- College of the Sequoias*
- Gateway Financial Planning Group
- Wyndham Visalia*

Business Connector Members

- Citizens Business Bank
- Devon Mathis for Assembly*
- Round Table Pizza*

Small Business Members:

- Gunning & Gunning, C.P.A.*
- Hatherley Family Law, Inc.*
- Klink Citrus Association*



VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Security Self-Storage*
- Sun Fresh
- Tahiti Pools
- The Barn*

* Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber 110% Club.

JR. CEO SPOTLIGHT



Name: Cebria Freeborn
Company: Shadow & C's Dog Bakery
Title: Owner

How did you come up with your business idea?

As a child, I was always interested in working with animals. When I was about eight, I started thinking about opening a dog training and grooming business. That possibility eventually faded as I got older and realized that frequent training sessions would be a huge commitment. Fast forward to about a month before my tenth birthday. We were about to get some dog treats for my dog when the idea struck me. Having an occasional dog treat stand would be less of a commitment, I would get to work with dogs, and it had good money behind it. Then when Jr. CEO rolled around, it was the perfect time to start my business.

What's the best thing you

learned from the Jr. CEO program?

In the Jr. CEO program, the biggest thing I learned is probably to know who your competition is, to know what sets you apart from them, but to also not just focus on defeating them.

Why would you recommend the Jr. CEO program to other students?

I would recommend the Jr. CEO program to others because it makes you apply what you know to an actual situation instead of just storing the knowledge in your head. It also gives you a little sneak peak of how the market works and what it will be like when you're older.

What's next for your business?

I would say that the next step for my business is to make seasonal dog treats and make a website for my dog treats. I have a strong feeling that I will be able to reach more customers if they can order their items.

What is your favorite local business to visit in Visalia with friends and family?

My favorite local business in



PHOTO COURTESY OF VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Visalia to visit with my brother is Game Core. I like going there because it is a business that truly wants you to have

a nice visit. The employees are always willing to help you find what you need for a good D&D session.

THE LAW AT WORK

How to handle employee complaints of harassment



GUBLER & ABBOTT
 ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has a harassment prevention guide for California employers. The DFEH recommends taking the following steps:

- Conducting a thorough interview with the complaining employee;
- Giving the employee accused of inappropriate conduct an opportunity to explain their perspective;
- Interviewing relevant witnesses and reviewing relevant documents; and
- Taking other investigatory steps as may be necessary to determine facts, such as visiting work sites or reviewing video.

By Brett T. Abbott
 Gubler & Abbott LLP

Even when every effort is made to follow the law and company policy, situations can still arise where employees make complaints about harassment. How should managers, supervisors, human resources (HR) personnel and companies as a whole respond to such complaints? The Department of

- The person conducting the investigation should reach a reasonable and fair conclusion based on the information collected and reviewed during the investigation.

The person selected to conduct the investigation should be impartial. While an employer may engage employees to conduct workplace investigations of other employees, an employer may also hire an outside investigator if concerns of impartiality or bias arise. In California, external investigators must be licensed private investigators or attorneys acting in their capacity as an attorney. Employers should retain all documentation received from an investigator.

Whether an attorney is conducting the investigation or an internal employee, the investigator is recommended to reach factual conclusions, not legal conclusions. An internal investigator may sometimes conclude whether behavior violated a company policy. This is not the same as determining that a person violated the law.

Once the investigation is completed, California regulations require that the employer take appropriate remedial steps if misconduct has been found. Employers are required under California law to prevent and correct unlawful behavior. In order to meet this obligation, per the DFEH, an employer should:

- Stop behavior before it rises to the level of unlawful conduct;
- Impose remedial action equal to the level of misconduct and that discourages it from happening again; and

- Determine what the company has done in the past in similar situations, to avoid claims of unfair remedial measures.

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

Visalia chamber on the move

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is excited to share what's new with travel. It has been a long year without travel, but

we have some great USA getaways coming up for 2021 with Chamber Explorations—New England Rails & Trails from Oct. 9 to 16; Music Cities Christmas from Dec. 3 to 8 and Santa Fe Holiday from Dec. 5 to 9, 2021.

New England Rails & Trails is an eight-day fall foliage tour with 11 Meals featuring seven nights in awesome locations in Boston, Mass.; North Conway, N.H.; Burlington, Vt. and Portland, Maine. Enjoy two scenic rail journeys—Conway Scenic Railroad and Mt. Washington Cog Rail. You will tour historic Boston, taste maple syrup at a maple sugar farm, enjoy an ice cream at Ben & Jerry's Factory, sit back and enjoy a scenic cruise on Casco Bay, see Quechee Gorge, travel the gorgeous Kancamagus Highway, visit Cold Hollow Cider Mill and Portland Lighthouse. End the tour with a lobster farewell dinner. You will see glorious foliage and make new friends along the way.

Music Cities Christmas is a six-day tour featuring Branson, Memphis and Nashville including nine meals. In Branson, Mo., enjoy the spectacular Shoji Tabuchi Christmas show, the Japanese entertainer has been voted the best show in Branson multiple times. See Doug Gabriel, a multi-talented entertainer and enjoy a cruise and show on the Showboat Branson Belle on Table Rock Lake. Stop at the Clinton Presidential Library, which is full of memorabilia and artifacts from his presidency. In Memphis, Tenn., enjoy dinner on Beale Street plus tour Elvis Presley's Graceland, the former home of famous entertainer. In Nashville, Tenn., enjoy a city tour to see the sights including the Ryman Auditorium, the original home of the Grand Ole Opry and visit the famous Country Music

See MOVE on page 3

SAVE the DATES

Oktoberfest
 September 24th

Christmas Tree Auction
 December 3rd

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK

YP Talks

MAY 18 @ 6 PM

facebook.com/VisaliaYPN

Century 21 Jordan-Link & Company agent, Vincent Arbizio recently received the 2020 President's Producer Award for Commitment to Quality Service and Productivity. Congratulations! **Sheriff Mike Boudreaux** named Deputy Jacob Flores Officer of the Year.



COURTESY OF TULARE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Congratulations to **Kaweah Delta Health Care District** who for the third consecutive year was named one of Healthgrades 2021 America's 250 Best Hospitals. **Bank of the Sierra** declared a regular quarterly cash dividend of \$0.21 per share.



Central Valley Community Bank recently announced Philip Smith as Vice President, Commercial Relationship Manager. **Momentum Broadcasting** raised over \$200,000 for St. Jude Hospital. Through a two day RadioThon, Kings Mortgage and Momentum Broadcasting Radio Stations

106.7 KJUG Country and 99.7 Classic Rock generated a new record in donations for the hospital and besting the station's previous record by \$20,000.

Congratulations to **Pacific Employers** who celebrated their 57th year in business in April!

Throughout March, **Assistance League of Visalia (ALV)** members bought, and handmade Easter cards for the residents of Westgate Gardens Care Center. Cards were delivered to 99 residents and 100 staff. ALV also would like to thank those who came out on March 24 in support of their Pasta for a Purpose fundraiser. Over 300 spaghetti dinners were sold in three hours. Funds will help provide books, backpacks, hygiene kits and more for children throughout Tulare County.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF VISALIA

Visit Visalia offers big adventures

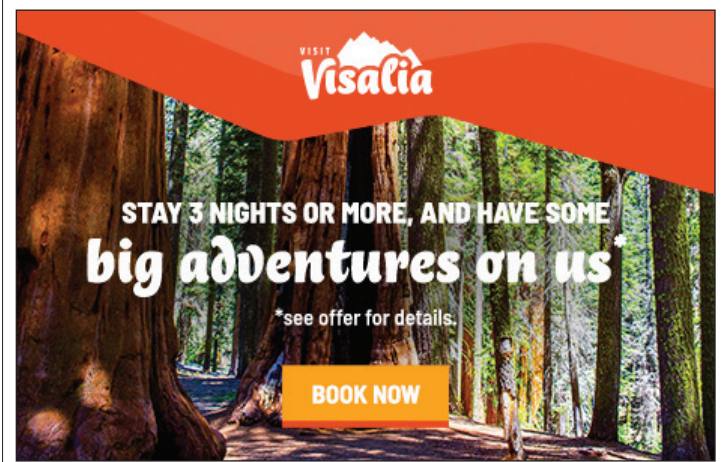
Visit Visalia, the gateway city to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, announces a limited-time promotion that invites travelers to have a "Big Adventure on Us." Visitors who book a three-night stay in Visalia can choose from two limited time offers: a free Annual Pass to Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks or a free \$50 Gas Card. Visitors can see the "Big Trees" on us or save "Big" at the gas pumps. The promotion is offered through the vacation booking service on VisitVisalia.com.

Activities and Outdoor Exploration:

- Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks - from the biggest trees, to the deepest canyon, to hikes with amazing views, the national parks make a great outdoor destination. The parks are open for visitors and reservations are not required to enter. The highlight of the parks is the General Sherman Tree: 275 feet tall, about 102 feet in diameter and weighs more than 2.7 million pounds. It is also the largest living organism, by volume, on the planet.
- Lake Kaweah is perfect for boating, fishing, swimming and relaxing. It is just 20 minutes from downtown Visalia.
- Imagine U Children's Museum sparks creativity in kids and their parents. They have been working on new exhibits and interactive activities for their opening on May 1.
- Visalia Adventure Park (open now) and Sequoia Springs Waterslides (opening May 15 for weekend fun) are great for all ages. Go-Karts, Bumper Boats, Mini-Golf, Arcade Games, Water Slides, and more are sure to entertain.
- Farmer Bob's World at McKellar Farms offers tours of a working citrus ranch. Make it really special and book a "Walk with a Grower" tour. This is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to walk through the groves and talk with a real citrus farmer.
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust protects several outdoor spaces perfect for the eco-conscious traveler. Join them for Stewardship Days and volunteer in the native plant nursery or help with trail maintenance. Of course, a hike through one of their pristine preserves is also special.
- Downtown Visalia is a charming and vibrant district with more than 12 breweries that offer traditional and inventive craft brews in a friendly beer scene, 80+ restaurants such as the elegant Vintage Press, the Mediterranean favorite Pita Kabob Gastropub, and the quickly growing Quesadilla Gorilla, a small restaurant nestled next to the iconic Visalia Fox Theater. The boutique shops and entertainment venues that line Main Street are fun to explore.

The details:

Of course, our special promotion has some rules and regulations, but not many. To get either the free Annual Park Pass or the \$50 free gas card, book travel directly on VisitVisalia.com/stay. A three-night stay is required, and travel must take place by June 30, 2021. Offer valid while supplies last. For complete details, rules and regulations, go to visitvisalia.com/deals-and-promotions.



Kawneer continues to advance the frontiers of building and architectural design



Kawneer is a part of Arconic's Building and Construction Systems (BCS) business and is a leading supplier of architectural systems and products with locations across North America and Europe.

Our product portfolio combines world-class engineering with enviable aesthetics. From curtain wall systems and windows, to entrances and framing systems, Kawneer solutions not only look beautiful, they also enhance daylighting, increase thermal performance and help reduce energy costs. Our aluminum products enable building occupants to enjoy more productive, secure and comfortable environments.

Kawneer helps deliver infinite possibilities and innovative design solutions that inspire architects, contractors and glaziers to create buildings with better performance, protection and productivity. Leading the façade industry for more than a century, Kawneer draws on a long history of innovation and expertise to create next-generation technologies.

Locally, Kawneer has more than 100 employees who work in our Visalia facility, which has been in operation for over 40 years. Our employees are committed to providing best-in-class products and service to our customers and to enriching the communities we call home. Over the past years, we have contributed hundreds of volunteer hours to support local organizations



PHOTO COURTESY OF KAWNEER

Kawneer boasts a remarkable portfolio that combines world-class engineering with enviable aesthetics. From curtain wall systems and windows to entrances and framing systems Kawneer looks at every aspect of their clients' needs.



that seek to make a positive impact in our region. We are proud to be part of the

vibrant business community in Visalia, as we continue to advance the frontiers of building and ar-

chitectural design for multifamily, education, healthcare, public buildings, retail, commercial office space and sports facilities around the world.

To learn more about Kawneer, an Arconic Company, and employment opportunities at the Kawneer Visalia facility, visit www.arconic.com/apply-now.

Water & Agriculture Day Session



Sonia Smalley
VP of Lending
Tucoemas FCU

You turn on the faucet, and there you have it, Water! But where does our water come from? Leadership Visalia spent the morning on Zoom and later took an afternoon field trip to learn about our water and agriculture in California and the Central Val-

ley. The April day session was led by Esta Willman and Amy Gonzalez.

We began the morning with a Zoom presentation from Kevin McCusker, manager of community affairs with California Water Service. California Water was formed in 1926 and provides service across California, as well as Hawaii, New Mexico and Washington.

Service is provided to approximately 2 million Californians through 500,000 service connections distributing over 80 billion gallons of water annually. California Water conducts more than 400,000 water quality tests per year. Reliability runs deep as California Water balances the need to maintain and improve our drinking water infrastructure, to ensure safety and reliability of water service, and to preserve affordability to their customers. In Visalia, there are 50 local employees that

serve our community. They trust our drinking water for themselves, family, kids, and grandkids, too. We should, too.

Next, we heard from presenter Mark Larsen, General Manager of Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District. Mark shared that KDWCD was formed in 1927 to help conserve and store waters from the Kaweah River, main-

See LEADERSHIP on page 5

MOVE

Continued from page 2

Hall of Fame. See an evening performance of the Grand Ole Opry and enjoy a holiday dinner and show at the amazing Opryland Resort. You will return with fabulous memories of these three cities.

Santa Fe Holiday is a five-day tour including six meals. Sit back on a Santa Fe, N.M., City Tour to learn all about this artists' mecca. See the Plaza, the Palace of the Governors, built in 1610 and visit the Loretto Chapel. Also visit The Shop-A Christmas Store, located near the Plaza and one of the country's oldest year-round Christmas stores. On an Albuquerque, N.M., City Tour, visit the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center depicting the history of 19 Native American pueblos and stop in historic Old Town with

over 150 shops, galleries and restaurants. Travel north via the "High Road to Taos" passing through ancient villages founded in the 1700s. See the Taos Pueblo, the only living Native American community designated both a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a National Historic Landmark. The multi-storied adobe buildings have been continuously inhabited for over 1,000 years. Enjoy time and shopping in the Taos Plaza, also well known for its traditional holiday decorations. On the last night, enjoy a farewell dinner in Santa Fe and fall in love with the southwest.

To book a trip with the Chamber visit: visaliachamber.org/travel; Premier World Discovery, 2615 190th Street, Suite 200, Redondo Beach, CA 90278; call 209-606-0958 or 877-953-8687; or visit www.premierworlddiscovery.com; or email jthornton@premier-worlddiscovery.com

GROUND BREAKING



Eagle Mountain Casino held a groundbreaking ceremony on April 6 for their new casino on 40 acres located near the Porterville Airport off Highway 65.

Comcast to invest \$1B to bring digital success to low-income Americans

Comcast's Internet Essentials program has already connected more than 10 million people over the past 10 years



On the 10th anniversary of its Internet Essentials program, Comcast announced last week it would invest \$1 billion over the next 10 years to help further close the digital divide and give even more low-income Americans the tools and resources they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world. The announcement coincides with the release of a 10-year progress report showing that, since 2011, the company, working in collaboration with its network of thousands of nonprofit partners, has connected a cumulative total of more than 10 million people in America to broadband internet at home, the overwhelming majority of whom were not connected prior to signing up.

Comcast's \$1 billion commitment will include investments in a number of critical areas, including: additional support for its ongoing Lift Zone initiative, which establishes WiFi-connected safe spaces in 1,000+ community centers nationwide for students and adults by the end of 2021; new laptop and computer donations; grants for nonprofit community organizations to create opportunities for low-income Americans, particularly in media, technology, and entrepreneurship; and continued investment in the company's landmark Internet Essentials program. It is estimated that these new commitments will impact as many as 50 million Americans over the next 10 years. In 2021 alone, Comcast estimates students will be able to complete more than 25 million hours of remote learning lessons to further address the "homework gap" at the hundreds of Lift Zone locations that have already opened or will open soon.

"Ten years is a remarkable milestone, signifying an extraordinary amount of work and collaboration with our incredible community partners across the country," said Dave Watson, chief executive officer at Comcast Cable. "Together, we have been able to connect millions of people to the power of the internet at home, and to the endless opportunity, education, growth, and discovery it provides. Today, we are rededicating ourselves to this mission to ensure that the next generation of students in America has the tools, resources, and abilities they need to succeed in an increasingly digital world."

"For more than a decade, Comcast has been a leader in working with communities to close the digital divide through its Internet Essentials program," said Marc H. Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League. "From its beginning as a pilot program with the Wilmington Urban League to today, Comcast's Internet Essentials program has transformed millions of lives by connecting low-income households to the power of broadband. While the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic placed a spotlight on the digital divide, for the past decade Comcast, in partnership with or-



ADOBE STOCK

ganizations like the National Urban League, has been leading the effort to close the digital divide, address the homework gap, and ensure low-income communities have the necessary digital skills."

"Last year, we partnered with Comcast on a major campaign to encourage Americans to participate in the first-ever digital census," added Rebecca DeHart, CEO at Fair Count. "We are so proud to have partnered with Comcast on this valuable work—connectivity is incredibly essential to civic participation. It gives communities a voice and it enables individuals to take part in the cultural conversations that need to take place in this country. Broadband adoption, just like census participation, can mean the difference between communities growing and thriving or being left behind. For the past decade, the Internet Essentials program has successfully helped to narrow these digital divides. We look forward to the next 10 years of Internet Essentials and join Comcast in celebrating this significant achievement."

"For a decade Comcast's Internet Essentials program has provided Latino families with tools and resources to access high speed internet at home. Hispanic Federation has been proud to partner with Comcast and work with this program to bridge the digital divide and offer Latino communities the opportunity to access health, educational, and economic resources online," said Brent Wilkes, senior vice president at the Hispanic Federation. "We look forward to the next ten years of partnership with Comcast as we tackle more challenges in our ever-changing digital world."

In addition to capturing the total number of connections Internet Essentials has provided, the 10-year progress report also highlights other key metrics about the program, including having:

- Increased the program's internet speeds six times, from 1.5 Mbps in 2011 to 50 Mbps today, without ever increasing the price of the program, which has re-

mained \$9.95/month

- Launched its Lift Zones program, which aims to connect more than 1,000 community centers with free WiFi by the end of 2021
- Developed an Internet Essentials Partnership Program that has signed up hundreds of schools, school districts, and other organizations that have come together to help connect tens of thousands of students to the Internet during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Offered 60 days of free internet service to any new Internet Essentials customer who needed to get online during the coronavirus outbreak
- Expanded the number of languages our Internet Essentials call center agents can speak to more than 240, plus American Sign Language, to help ensure we break down language barriers that can prevent people from applying or getting online
- Built up an online learning center that includes more than 200 digital literacy training videos, guides, and reports that are free to anyone to use, including non-customers
- Developed an employee network of 3,000 Internet Essentials ambassadors who volunteer their time to help spread the word about the program in their communities

This new commitment comes on the heels of a series of initiatives announced during the COVID-19 pandemic that reinforced the company's commitment to addressing the digital divide and the homework gap by upping speeds to 50 Mbps downstream without changing the program's \$9.95/month price. The company also continues to offer 60 days of free internet service to new Internet Essentials customers who sign up before June 30, 2021.

Four advanced Zoom tips

Rachel Ingram
Vice President
TechCare 360

In 2020 Zoom quickly became one of the most used tools for businesses. While people quickly adjusted to working with and using Zoom's normal functions, there was not much time for training on the helpful extras or advanced features of Zoom.

Our goal at TechCare360 is to help businesses thrive by making technology a friendly tool that helps your company thrive! We put together these tips so that you can't just use Zoom, but allow Zoom to become that friendly tool that helps YOU thrive. Here are 4 Advanced Zoom tips to help your team Thrive:

1. Temporary Unmute Using Spacebar

This tip allows you to temporarily unmute with little effort. Simply press the spacebar to talk and let go to mute again. This is great for quick comments without having to find the mute button. Bonus tip: If you click on the up arrow next to the mute/audio button, then click on "Audio Settings..." then click on "Keyboard Shortcuts." You can find more useful shortcuts and can even make your own!

2. Custom Zoom Background

The premade backgrounds work, but if you want to step up your background game, we have the tip for you. Imagine having a custom background with your company logo showing. You can use PowerPoint, Canva, Photoshop, or any other software that can create a PNG type file. To make a personalized background. De-

sign a background in your chosen program with your logo or graphics, then click on "File," then "Save." Make sure you change the "Save as type:" to a PNG and save anywhere on your computer. Once that is done, click the up arrow next to the video icon on the bottom left. Next, choose "Choose Virtual Background..." Once this is open, click the "+" icon and choose "Add Image." Select the PNG file you made earlier, then click "Open." You will have an impressive background that will have people asking how you created your background.

3. Turn Your Zoom Call Into Text Using otter.ai

For an important meeting where you may want to look back on what was said, you can transcribe your Zoom calls. That's right, you can turn that hour-long meeting into text that you can save. The first step is to record your Zoom session! There is a record button at the bottom of every Zoom meeting. You get 600 minutes of transcribing free per month with otter.ai. Once you create an Otter.ai profile on their website and are logged in, press "Import." Drag and drop your "audio_only" recording of the Zoom call into the import window on otter.ai. In mere moments, it will turn the call audio into a written transcript of your meeting. You can save that file for your own use or share it with your team members. No longer will you need to take notes to remember what was said.

4. Added Security (End to End Encryption)

Security while working remotely is an essential need for businesses. Zoom has had its fair share of security issues, which is part of why we recommend using other programs that have this security setting built into every call, like Micro-

See TECH on page 6



SUBMITTED PHOTO

City awaits proposal for Creative Center Complex surplus property

The city block Creative Center Complex is designated as surplus city property giving affordable housing developers time to issue a proposal to buy it



The city of Visalia is ready to sell their property that hosts both The Creative Center and Ice House Theatre. But it can't be sold overnight, and some weighty decisions might be on the horizon.

The city council learned that the property at East Race and North Bridge—commonly known as the Creative Center Complex—was appraised for \$900,000. Overall, it spans a little over three acres and consumes the entire block.

Assistant city manager, Leslie Caviglia said the city does not have much use for the property since deciding to place the public works yard on Ben Maddox. Both the Creative Center and Ice House Theatre are on the property, along with several homes that were moved onto the property.

Caviglia said added that because the city owns the property there is some added regulation that comes with improving facilities.

"It also just becomes more complex for the entities that are leasing," Caviglia said.

"...if they want to make any improvements, that must be by prevailing wage, it must go through all the city purchasing requirements...and it just becomes very complex and convoluted for organizations that are trying to operate a somewhat on a shoestring [budget]."

Ultimately the council voted in favor of designating the property a "surplus property" per state law.

Because of state law the city cannot simply appraise and sell the land to tenants currently there, or other developers. According to a city staff report on the item the city must go through the "state required disposition process." The report states that the city must solicit proposals for 60 days and offer applicable entities the ability to negotiate before a private developer can apply.

An applicable entity would be an agency whose purpose is to develop low- and moderate-income housing, or an entity seeking to establish the property as a park. Short of that, Caviglia said, after 60 days other commercial developers could submit proposals if

the city council wanted to accept them.

The staff report states that the property was "enhanced" using federal community development block grant (CDBG) funds. If the city managed to sell the property they would need to "reimburse" a balance of \$175,000, but the remainder would be used at the discretion of the council.

The two most well known tenants on the property are the Creative Center and the Visalia Players. According to the city's staff report the Creative Center creates programming for up to 100 developmentally challenged adults, and leases their facility for \$1 per year through 2030. The Visalia Players use the Ice House Theatre to put on between eight and 10 productions a year. They do not currently have a lease with the city for the theatre.

President of Visalia Players, Karl Schoettler said it would be unfortunate for the property to sell to another entity instead of the Creative Center of his agency. Schoettler said the Visalia Players have invested hundreds

See CREATIVE CENTER on page 6

Passion against domestic violence



Patrick Salazar
Insurance Agent
State Farm

Prior to the July 21, 2020 article written by Erica Lutterbein for the Family Services newsletter, people always knew I was very passionate about the subject of domestic violence but I never explained why. The article focused on the challenges my wife went through, and our 18 month old daughter, before I had met them. Erica's article clearly

See PASSION on page 5



Does the Chamber have any upcoming events?

We will be hosting our Loyal to Local Awards on June 10! Tune in on Facebook Live.

How do I apply for Leadership Visalia?

We are now taking applications for the 2021-2022 Leadership Visalia cohort. Please visit visaliachamber.org/leadership to download the application. Applications are due July 31, 2021.

Have a question about the Chamber?

Send me a message:
Jena@visaliachamber.org

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APPLICATION DEADLINE JULY 31, 2021

LEADERSHIP VISALIA
VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Circling a difficult intersection

City holds grand opening for roundabout at the intersection of Santa Fe Street and Tulare Avenue

Reggie Ellis
President/Publisher
The Sun-Gazette

Police motorcycles, fire engines, public buses and city work trucks circled the intersection at Santa Fe Street and Tulare Avenue on April 8.



The Sun-Gazette

The parade of city vehicles from nearly every department was not due to some large scale emergency but rather part of a grand opening of the redesigned intersection at Santa Fe Street and Tulare Avenue on April 8. The intersection is crucial to the city's traffic flow as Santa Fe connects residents in the city's southeast to downtown and Tulare Avenue connects six schools from Pinkham to Akers. It was also difficult to navigate due to its misalignment and uneven approaches.

Mayor Steve Nelsen led the ceremony and was joined by city councilmember Brett Taylor and three members of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, Amy Shuklian, Larry Micari and Pete Vander Poel. The intersection happens to be on the boarder of Shuklian's District 3, central Visalia, and Micari's District 1, which stretches from east Visalia to Three Rivers. Vander Poel's district isn't near the project, but he is chair of the Tulare County Association of Governments, the county's transportation authority.

"This is a project that finished on budget and ahead of schedule," Mayor Nelsen said.

Work on the \$4.3 million project began on Dec. 2, 2020



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SUN-GAZETTE

Tulare County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Amy Shuklian, Visalia Mayor Steve Nelson and District 2 Board Supervisor Pete Vander Poel (with his two children in tow) cut the ceremonial ribbon for the city and county funded roundabout at Tulare and Santa Fe last month.

and finished last week, a month ahead of the original soft opening scheduled for May. Public Works Director Nick Mascia praised work crews for efficiently completing the project despite obstacles of social distancing and weather.

"The Public Works Department took on this project during a world wide pandemic," Mascia said.

One of the few silver linings in the pandemic is there were less cars on the road, allowing cities to get a jump on road projects to make morning commutes smoother once

things get back to normal. It was especially important for the roundabout which required Santa Fe Street to be closed from Cypress Avenue to Paradise Avenue and Tulare Avenue to be closed from Bridge Street and Burke Street for several months.

Just over half of the \$4.3 million project was funded by Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding from the state for projects designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality.

LEADERSHIP

Continued from page 1

tain the channels for flood control, conserve and protect the underground waters of the Kaweah River Basin. Mark explained that our best reservoir is the snowpack in the mountains. The snow sits up there like an icebox. In spring, it begins to melt and run down, which is perfect timing for agriculture. California has rich soil and a dry climate, so a water supply is necessary to irrigate as needed. Although there are water rights for surface and groundwater, we still don't have enough water. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 was passed to manage California groundwater in a new way and reach sustainability by 2040.

Our final Zoom presenter was Tricia Stever Blattler, executive director at Tulare County Farm Bureau. What is a Farm Bureau? It is an independent, non-governmental, grassroots membership organization to identify, analyze and solve problems for farms, rural communities, and the agriculture industry. California Farm Bureau and its members began in the early 1900s as part of the UC Cooperative Extension. Today, the Farm Bureau represents 6 million farm families nationwide. In California, 93,000 farm families belong to 53 county farm bureaus.

We learned that California is the largest farm state in the U.S. More than 400 crop and livestock commodities are grown in California, and 97% of all farms are family-owned and operated. The top five California crops are milk/cream, grapes, almonds, cattle/calves, and pistachios. In Tulare County, there are 4,187 farms which amounts to 1,250,121 acres of farmland (299 acres/size avg). Tulare County's top five export countries are the Republic of Korea, Japan, China, Mexico, and Taiwan. This includes 42% oranges, 19% grapes, 9% pistachios and peaches and 5% plums.

Farmers face many challenges in California agriculture, such as regulatory costs, labor shortages, increased wages, the inability to relocate operations, and greater demand on air, land, and water resources.

For the afternoon session, we put on comfortable clothes and shoes and met at Farmer Bob's World located at McK-

ellar Family Farms in Ivanhoe. McKellar Farm began in 1927, when Hugh Angus McKellar and his wife, Vernice, along with Vernice's father John Jordan, purchased the property. Today, Robert "Bob" McKellar (aka Farmer Bob) and his lovely wife, Ann, own and manage the farm along with the beautiful weddings and special event venue, Historic Seven Sycamores Ranch.

Farmer Bob's World represents the ag industry in the Central Valley and the citrus industry and its importance to the vitality and economy of California. It's also a great real-world example where farming and STEM (science, technology, economics, and math) all come together in real life.

The group enjoyed a one-hour walking tour of the farm, which included a u-pick orange grove, weather and solar station, farm exhibits, party barn and animal viewing. There were chickens, roosters, and rabbits. Two of the roosters decided to show off by competing over who could make the loudest cock-a-doodle-do sound! Some of us got to turn a large wind machine by hand. We learned how to hand pick and clip oranges properly. Oranges are cut right at the base of the stem and not pulled off the tree, which can expose the flesh and cause problems in processing. We put on our white gloves to protect our hands and the fruit from damage, grabbed our hand clipper, and headed out searching for the perfect orange. So many options to choose and the two I picked were big and juicy.

Elaine Brown, our wagon ride tour guide, delivered a 40-minute educational audio presentation through their beautiful orange groves. We learned about grove maintenance and the complexities of integrated pest management. At the end of the tour, we had the opportunity to meet Farmer Bob for a question and answer session.

Farmer's Bob World is a nonprofit and relies on donations and volunteers. Take a tour, donate your time, supplies, or become a sponsor. For more information and to donate, visit www.McKellarFamilyFarms.com.

Overall, the Leadership Visalia class learned about the importance of water and agriculture in our Central Valley and around the states and world. It was an amazing day!

PASSION

Continued from page 4

showed Lisa & Marissa's challenges, their support system, and a success story to share with others in hopes of knowing they too can see the light at the end of their own personal story.

The driving force for Lisa at the time was her daughter Marissa, to leave an abusive relationship and make a change. Lisa didn't want her daughter to see the example of that behavior and perpetuate it. I felt the exact same way, not wanting Marissa to see that as the norm but to set an example which will help her in future relationships. The more we get involved with Family Services, the more programs we see that are put in place for survivors. I even had my West Visalia Kiwanis club help when we were told Family Services was setting up a program for survivors with pets, understanding some wouldn't leave if they knew they were leaving a much loved pet behind. Again, programs I didn't think about but glad they are in place.

I adopted Marissa after Lisa and I were married and I'm proud to say she finished her Ph.D. in global public health before her 29th year. She's currently a psychology professor at Cuyamaca College, married to a wonderful man, and spends time on domestic violence studies around the world. We also have another daughter who is a freshman at Cal State Los Angeles.

Lastly, if someone were to ask why be a part of Denim Days, simply read the story. If you have daughters you'll help out. This year we're matching up to \$1,000 in donations received at our office. Family Services has a goal of \$5,000, we want to help as much as we can. Our family is passionate about this subject in hopes of others finding success in their life from an overwhelmingly negative situation.

The Eagle Award

Jake Sorensen

Owner
Sorensen Agency, Ins. Services

Prior to business, I have spent the last 17 years immersed in service between my time in the U.S. Marine Corps and in law enforcement. Being able to have an impact on others has always been a rewarding experience and when I decided to open my insurance agency, I knew I could use this platform to effectively reach more people through my services and philanthropy. Community service and philanthropy is at the core of The Sorensen Agency and guides our



values and the way we serve our clients and community.

The Sorensen Agency has been open for business for almost two years and our early success would not have happened without the wonderful support of our local community. We understand the relationship between a business and a community does not stop at the transaction and we aim to support the very same community that supports our success. We are committed to giving a percentage of our success back to the many community organizations and charities that improves livelihoods and reflects our values.

The Sorensen Agency created the Eagle Award to show our commitment to the community and bring awareness and monetary support to organizations that regularly display the values the Eagle Award represents. The Eagle Award represents Virtue, Commitment, and Community. The Eagle Award will be awarded annually on July 1 and it is our hopes to be able to support many organizations annually. As the Sorensen Agency's success grows so will our contributions to the community.

The Eagle Award is meant to touch lives up and down the Central Valley and we need your help to spread the message. This year, 2021, will be the inaugural award and we plan to support the Kids and are looking for charity organizations who invest in the future of our children. If you know a charity organization that plays an important role in a child's life, please let us know! We are honored to recognize the great charity organizations and we hope to highlight and bring awareness to the many worthy causes.

Please email Jake@TheSorensenAgency.com with any charity nominations.

• SINCE 1887 •

Loyal to local Awards

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VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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HEALTH CARE NOTE

Advancing Visalia to the next tier



Kerry Hydash
President and CEO
Family HealthCare Network



When COVID-19 first made its appearance in California, Tulare County and surrounding Counties were some of the hardest hit by the disease. As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Family HealthCare Network understood its responsibility to act quickly and efficiently to respond and provide care for our communities. Having a full understanding of the barriers faced by minority populations, FHCN quickly implemented protocols to ensure that access to primary care services remained intact, and positioned itself at the forefront of a COVID response. Fast forward to today, FHCN remains a vital part of the efforts propelling our community into the next tier of reopening, and in finding a new normalcy.

When COVID-19 vaccines became available, our teams jumped at the opportunity to become a hub for providing equitable access to the vaccines. Family HealthCare Network serves the most migrant/seasonal farmworkers in the Nation among FQHCs and is versed in combating the barriers to health care that are faced. This knowledge led us to enact known strategies to engage and educate our food and ag communities. Family HealthCare Network worked with

counties and food and ag leaders to secure vaccine allocations and gain access to workplaces to provide on-site vaccine clinics and combat barriers for its workers. We chose to keep a paper registration process to eliminate technological barriers and hosted vaccine clinics during work hours to ensure ag workers did not have to miss work. Included in our strategy and equally as important was an educational campaign, because beyond the development of a safe and effective vaccine, people most in need must be both able and willing to receive it. To date, FHCN has partnered with various food and ag companies, and continues to be a health partner of choice in administering vaccines for their staff.

In addition to hosting pop-up vaccine clinics, FHCN continued to support Tulare County with Adopt-A-Lane events, kept testing venues open, and continued to provide access to primary and specialty care services to our patients. Family HealthCare Network remains a strong community partner, and continues to be a dynamic advocate in health care. This advocacy led to FHCN gaining access to vaccines across multiple avenues. As of April, FHCN has administered a large number of doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to the elderly, farmworkers, and those with underlying health conditions. By distributing the vaccine in an equitable way, we also address social determinants of health and secure a healthier population, society, and workforce for Visalia.

As we continue in our efforts to normalize, vaccine administration will continue to be a high priority. We encourage all who are able to receive their vaccine to do so as soon as possible. Family HealthCare Network will continue to be a beacon of hope for our communities, and remain committed to providing quality care to all.



THE SUN-GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

Local economy shows signs of rebound

John Lindt
SierratotheSea News Service

As the vaccine rollout continues to hit a fever pitch, the national jobs report reflects a robust improvement in employment. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics employers added 916,000 jobs, and Tulare County is also seeing a bounce in the economy.

In farm country, tractor sales are up, there is an increase in farm jobs and citrus prices are in the green for a change.

In the county's largest city, Visalia building permit valuation is up 45% compared to this time last year, before the pandemic actually took hold.

Included in that figure is a 14% increase in the number of single-family home building permits, a nice bump in multi-family construction to 86 units so far (much more in the pipeline this year) compared to just six units this time last year, and an 18% increase

in Visalians remodeling their homes.

Even more impressive is the commercial construction activity underway. New commercial buildings number 15 this year through March compared to seven last year at this time and the valuation has gone from \$3 million to \$12.2 million. Commercial alterations are valued \$37 million versus \$24 million last year, a 53% increase. Altogether, the value of all permits is \$111 million versus \$76 million this time in 2020.

"Demand is just amazing. Who would have thought that people would build new restaurants here with what has happened in the past year," Visalia architect Thom Black said.

Around town, local restaurant favorites are inviting their customers to come back with COVID fading and more residents vaccinated.

In the Visalia Industrial Park with UPS and Amazon stoking

the development fire, existing buildings are being gobbled up including a 50,000-square foot tilt-up at 8230 Doe Ave. recently purchased by ServiceMaster by Benevento who will be enjoying lots more space now for their business.

By contrast, Fresno commercial realtor Buk Wagner of Colliers says Fresno industrial space is harder to find than in Visalia given High Speed Rail's demolition of properties and real and threatened lawsuits against the city in opposition of adding more acreage for the industry.

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Visit www.visaliachamber.org

CREATIVE CENTER
Continued from page 4

of thousands of dollars in to the theater to maintain it. And with so much invested he would rather not have to leave the theatre. But he added that he doesn't expect that to happen.

"I think [the city is] going to consider that we're both non-profit organizations. And again, we've put hundreds of thousands of dollars into the property over the years, and so I think they'll take that into consideration and ideally, make us a deal we can't refuse," Schoettler said.

The Visalia Players, like many other performing groups, were deeply affected by the pandemic. Schoettler said that the organization was forced to draw from their savings account to make ends meet over the last 13 months.

"We're definitely going to have to ramp up and do some fundraising activities here sooner rather than later," Schoettler said.

In an attempt to stay as relevant as possible in 2020 the Visalia Players made broad attempts to appeal to theater lovers over social media. Around Christmas time they asked the community for donations. Fortunately, they gathered between \$4,000 and \$5,000.

When it comes to negotiations with the city over a new lease Schoettler said that discussions are preliminary.

CELEBRATE
Continued from page 1

lic's health and safety.

Supporting local events builds connection, brings us together after needing to be apart and can be the extra boost a business or organization needs in this moment. As we've shared before, no matter what is going on at the state or federal level, local is where folks build their lives and create the communities we are all committed to.

For more information on the city of Visalia's special event process, visit www.visalia.city/specialevents or contact the special events committee at sec@visalia.city.

For the latest updates and news from the city of Visalia, visit www.visalia.city or visit them on social media @CityofVisalia.

TOPOGRAPH
Continued from page 1

To ensure a smooth transition and continuity of service for DMI clients, Tellalian will continue as a consultant to the newly formed Topograph LLC and as editor of Lifestyle Magazine. "Both Eric and I are resolute in making sure the process is seamless for all of our clients, so they continue to receive the same quality of marketing, whether niche or global," said Tellalian.

For more information on how the merger/acquisition will affect current customers, visit topgrph.com/about.

4Creeks Creative has successfully helped hundreds of small business owners and marketing directors clarify their message, create beautiful and compelling digital content, and make an impact through strategic marketing campaigns.

DMI Agency has developed and deployed marketing campaigns across all media and earned more than 35 Gold ADDY and Creative Excellence Awards, including two National Gold Advertising Awards.

TECH
Continued from page 4

soft Teams. However, we know that Zoom is a highly used tool and want to help you stay safe while using it. One way to protect your calls and the information shared on Zoom is by using the "End To End Encryption" setting in Zoom. This creates a secure connection. To turn this feature on, go to "Settings" on your Zoom profile. Find "Allow Use Of End-To-End Encryption" and turn it on if it is not set to on by default. You

should now see a small icon on the top left of your screen that says you have this feature enabled. All other call participants must enable their "End To End Encryption" settings as well. You can verify that the encryption is working by confirming that the other call participants see the same verification number. If they all match, you have a secure call.

With these tips, we hope that Zoom will be more helpful. You can get started on your next project knowing that your calls are safe, professional, and that you are working efficiently.

EDD GRANT
Continued from page 1

multi-agency collaborative effort which includes the following Tulare County partner organizations:

- College of the Sequoias Access & Ability Center, WorkAbility III Program
- Porterville College Disability Resource Center
- Visalia Adult School
- Tulare Adult School
- Tulare County Office of

Education—A Ticket to Success

- Department of Rehabilitation—San Joaquin Valley District
- Tulare/Kern/Inyo/Mono Cluster of the Employment Development Department
- Tulare-Kings Healthcare Partnership
- South Valley Industrial Collaborative
- Community Services Employment Training (CSET)
- Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County