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AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Vol. 42, No. 8 | August 2021

INSIDE

Regional nonprofits awarded \$655K from Bank of America

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Delta variant sparks new vaccination urgency

Many of us are ready for the pandemic to be over, but we cannot ignore that COVID-19 numbers are on the rise. **6**

EVENTS

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR DATES

Coffee & Conversation with Your Chamber CEO-Facebook Live

Time: 8 a.m.

AUGUST 11 & 18 Visalia Chamber Travel Slideshow

Time: 12 p.m.
Location: City Admin Building
220 N. Santa Fe Avenue

AUGUST 19 YPN Rawhide Takeover

Time: 6 p.m.
Location: Visalia Rawhide

AUGUST 26 Ambassador Monthly Meeting

Time: 8 a.m.
Location: Visalia First

AUGUST 26 State of Tulare County Luncheon

Time: 11:30 a.m.
Location: Bello Vita Venue

TRAVEL WITH US

- 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
- APRIL 25-MAY 1, 2022**
Southern Charm
- 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



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www.visaliachamber.org/travel



Unemployment is down as home prices inch up in Tulare County and Visalia

Tulare County unemployment mostly rebounds from pandemic, median housing prices in the county are \$324,000 compared to \$346,000 in Visalia



John Lindt
Publisher
Sierra2theSea.net

Businesses are hiring, and while some would-be workers are waiting for their extended unemployment benefits to end, others are leaping into the scarce workforce.

In Tulare County the unemployment rate was 10.2% in May 2021, down from a revised 11% in April, and below the year-ago estimate of 16.5%. This compares with an unadjusted unemployment rate of 7.5% for California and 5.5% for the nation during



the same period.

Tulare County has approximately 5,400 more jobs than a year ago including 1,700 more in the hospitality industry, according to the California Employment Development Department. And more income may be exactly what workers need as housing prices continue to inch upward.

Visalia and Tulare County median home price are hitting a record high. Tulare County's median home sales price in May hit a record at \$324,350 says Brett Taylor, CEO of Tulare County Association of Realtors. Visalia- as well - hit a new high median number at \$346,000, adds Taylor, calling the trend "remarkable."

On the state level, California Association of Realtors reports existing single-family home sales totaled 445,660 in May, down 2.7 percent from April and up 86.7 percent from May 2020.

May's statewide median home price was \$818,260, up 0.5 percent from April and up 39.1 percent from May 2020. Year-to-date statewide home sales were up 34.6 percent in May.

Tulare County sales are up 17% year to date.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Keyboard vigilantes create treacherous divide



Gail Zurek
President and CEO
Visalia Chamber

We live in a world of keyboard vigilantes. You've seen them; heck, maybe you've been one. I know I have been tempted a time or two. Keyboard vigilantes fire off social media comments on public meeting live streams.

Their comments address things happening in the actual meeting being live-streamed. In particular, the keyboard vigilante is interested in fighting for 'their side.' Sitting at home on their phones or behind their computers, they use social media comments to argue with speakers presenting at the public meeting, even though the speakers cannot hear or respond. The comments I fear are less for the speaker and more for the others watching the meeting at home. These keyboard vigilantes feel wronged, want to fight for what is right, and think their comments will make the difference. More troubling, I think some fire off comments just to 'start something,' 'stir the pot' or 'keep fighting.'

Keyboard vigilantes create unintended consequences. The goal of wanting to help show a different perspective, or right a perceived wrong, instead leads to hurt, divide, and sows discontentment. Quick responses are encouraged, rather than thoughtful ones. Zingers are celebrated, and collaboration gets lost in the mix. When the meeting is over, we aren't stronger. Solutions have not been found, but instead, we're more divided and the goal even further away.

I am deeply worried about our community. The divide seems to be getting deeper, wid-

er, and more treacherous. I thought the lifting of COVID restriction would ease tensions. I thought we just needed a bit of normal back. While many things have gone back to "normal", the divide is still there. The tension is still rising. I worry we're headed down a path that will rip this community apart.

When I was younger, I ran home from school frustrated, angry, and scheming for ways to settle the score. I hated to lose, and I was already working on a plan to win when my mom sat me down. She patiently listened to why I was frustrated and heard all the details of my grand comeback plan. Beyond winning, she asked about my goal. She asked what I was trying to accomplish. She pushed me to see what I wanted beyond the emotion of the moment. And then she delivered the line that stuck with me, 'ya get more flies with honey than vinegar.'

I am a fighter. I want what is right to be known and done. I understand getting caught up in the moment. It's easy to do. It's even easier to do when you quickly, too quickly, can type what you "really think." But as my mom's line pushes, what's the goal. Vinegar divides. Most times winning isn't the win we want at all.

We need to try the honey approach. Instead of firing off a pithy retort, take a moment and listen more. Typically, particularly locally, we want the same large goal but disagree on the road to get there. That perspective of having the same goal helps me find a common-ground look for ways to come together. The road to the goal becomes less bumpy.

Human interaction cannot be overlooked, certainly when tackling large and complex problems. Social media is fantastic but not a tool to solve societal challenges. We must be willing to meet, talk, and—here's the critical piece—listen to each other.

We are a community together, not apart.

Raising Cane's announces August opening date



One of Visalia's newest restaurants has zeroed in on an opening date, and people are raising their hands for chicken fingers.

Raising Cane's Visalia's location has been under con-

struction for months. And as of last week the chicken finger restaurant announced they'll open their doors in late August. The company stated in a press release that they're excited to capture all of the traffic created by the national parks and nearby College of the Sequoias down Mooney Boulevard.

"The new Restaurant is conveniently located in a popular

See CANE'S on page 3



ADOBE STOCK

EDUCATION

Ag Irrigation Academy will quickly launch careers



In response to the urgent need for skilled workers who can design, install and maintain new water-saving agriculture irrigation technology, College of the Sequoias (COS) has opened the Ag Irrigation Academy. After just 18 weeks of intensive training, participants will be able to launch their careers in this new well-paid field with many employment opportunities in the Central Valley.

The new Ag Irrigation Academy combines two days of hands-on instruction in the classroom and outdoors at the farm on the Tulare campus, explained Charles Abee, COS Agriculture instructor, who developed the new curriculum and certificate. "Students will use the other days to complete up to 225 hours of paid or unpaid internships," said Abee. "Students and industry need a fast turnaround time, so we condensed the program into a semester." Upon completion, participants will be prepared for skilled employment and to earn industry certification.

Employers such as Wildeye® and Exeter Irrigation are eager to collaborate with the college to prepare the next generation of skilled employees and indicate that there are excellent career opportunities with contractors, manufacturers and farms.

"The COS Ag Irrigation Academy is a great hands-on program that will produce excellent candidates ready to work," said Daniel Eisenberg, General Manager, Wildeye®.

"With the increasing demand for skilled individuals in agricultural irrigation, the deeper understanding of fundamental principles and technical experience this program will provide could not come at a better time," said Kiel Taylor, General Manager, Exeter Irrigation.

For job seekers and those wanting a career change as well as college students and recent high school graduates, the Ag Irrigation Academy offers a fast track to interesting, reliable, outdoor employment. Salaries start at \$18-25/hr. to \$26-35/hr. with experience with many current job openings and excellent long-term prospects. No prerequisites or experience are required and the COS Ag Irrigation Academy program is tuition-free when financial aid

processes are followed. Those interested in jump-starting their careers may go to the Ag Irrigation Academy web page (COS.edu/AgIrrigation) and contact Chelsea Cushing for individualized assistance with enrollment at chelseac@cos.edu or 559-688-3044. The college is seeking employers to host interns for up to 225 hours. Companies can contact Cosmo Costales, CTE Career Services at cosmoc@cos.edu or (559) 688-3122.

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 Builder Members:

- Mountain West Builders
- Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers

Business Connector Members:

- 4 Dimension Films

Small Business Members:

- Cora Heiser Special Education Advocate
- Gong Cha

RENEWING

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

Keystone Members:

- 4Creeks, Inc.*
- Kaweah Health Medical Group (KHMG)*

Community Investor Members:

- Sequoia Gateway LLC

- Valley Children's Healthcare

Business Connector Members:

- Bank of America - Main St.
- Central Valley Christian School*
- Century 21 Jordan-Link & Company*
- Freestyle Event Services*
- IDEA! Printing & Graphics Inc*
- La Quinta Inn*
- Peninsula Messenger Service*
- Ruddell Stanton Bixler Mauritson & Evans, LLP
- TechCare360 Inc.*
- United Wholesale Lumber Company

Small Business Members:

- Armstrong Community Management*
- Cal-Valley Insurance Services
- Component Coffee Lab, LLC*
- Gilman Harris Travioli Slover*
- Keller & Wegley Consulting Engineers
- Kens Stakes & Supplies, Inc.*
- LPL Financial
- Lucky Day Laundry*
- Mayflower Tours*
- NSE Insurance Agencies, Inc.*



VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Redi-Rooter Plumbing*
- Scott, Mainord Langley & Simmons, Inc.*
- Super 8 Motel
- Sutton Hague Law Corporation
- The Perez Law Firm*
- The Pickled Deli
- VastNetworks - CVIN
- ZenBusiness

Community Investor Nonprofit Members:

- Gateway Church*

Business Connector Nonprofit Members:

- Sequoia Parks Conservancy
- Visalia Public Cemetery District*

Small Business Nonprofit Members:

- Visalia Fire Assoc. Local 3719

*Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber 110% Club.

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT



tri counties bank

Name: Jason Deniz
Company: Tri Counties Bank
Title: Business Development Manager

The Chamber helps Tri Counties Bank by recognizing us throughout the town and notifying us of upcoming social events, which allows us to be involved with the local community to make Visalia a better community for all. The Chamber also gives the Bank the opportunity to make important announcements. Our Ambassador meetings give us the opportunity to network so we can get to know local leaders in our community. It also gives us a chance to reach out and inform our local businesses and community members of the different financial services we offer to help improve their financial well-being - from a simple checking account, Home Equity Line of Credit, or auto loan, to commercial and equipment loans, and business accounts. Through our partnership with the Chamber, we can assist our community to prosper during these difficult times, thus allowing us to all grow in the process.

Getting involved with the Chamber helps employees directly assist their community, gain notoriety within their community and to get to know what is happening in their own backyard. Being a part of these events allows employees to build advantageous business relationships within the city of Visalia. These programs and events also promote team bonding and socializing which, in turn, improves team collaboration and morale.

The best part of working for Tri Counties Bank is the people and feeling like a part of a big family. Our employees get treated with respect and kindness from the top down. The Bank is a firm believer of promoting from

within and providing an environment for employees to succeed. I can speak from personal experience, as I was recently promoted to my position as Business Development Manager here in Visalia. Also, Tri Counties Bank believes in providing the best customer service experience possible, which directly reflects on our own customers. In my short time here in Visalia, I have met many customers who also have the sense that Tri Counties Bank is like a family and treats our customers as part of this family.

In Visalia, there are so many places to go out and have a great time with family and friends. The two locations that stick out to me the most are Mooney Grove Park and Visalia Downtown.

Mooney Grove is a great space to have a picnic, go fish, or even visit the museum. There are so many possibilities there that are fun for the entire family. It's an easy and inexpensive way to enjoy Visalia and have a great time with family and friends.

Visalia Downtown is another great location to take family and friends. There is a wide variety of shops, restaurants and entertainment available for an evening of fun for all ages. The downtown area lights up in the evening and has a positive atmosphere filled with excitement. The street comes alive with locals browsing the shops, enjoying delicious local cuisine and dancing the night away at any of the local bars/clubs. You can always attend many of the downtown annual events to enjoy a unique local experience, see a show or performance at the Fox Theater or even plan a relaxing evening at the local movie theater. Whatever it is you are looking for, you will find it in Visalia Downtown. And lucky enough for me, Tri Counties just moved downtown on Main Street so we can enjoy what it has to offer.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Name: Zac Blythe
Company: GreenBean
Title: Compliance Manager

Founded originally in 2013 by Visalia natives as a medical cannabis delivery service in Tulare County, GreenBean has been serving members of



the Visalia and greater Tulare County communities for years. Our dedication to our local communities led us to Woodlake, where we recently opened our new 4,000-square foot retail cannabis store in what was once the High Sierra Lumber yard.

Our first recreational dispensary recently launched on Dec. 28, 2020 and represents a new take on the cannabis buying experience.

With a focus on interactive product displays and knowledgeable cannabis consultants, the newly renovated facility provides an unmatched atmosphere of professionalism. The approach dispels the stereotypes of an atypical "cannabis shopping" experience. Whether you're a seasoned cannabis user or just trying to figure it out, GreenBean is the ideal destination for all of your cannabis needs and education.

We here at GreenBean pride ourselves on giving back to the communities we serve. Most recently, GreenBean sponsored the Woodlake Kiwanis 3rd of July Blast and partnered with the Visalia Rawhide Ballpark to promote and sponsor a ball-park movie night. GreenBean is also set to assist in the upcoming Mariachifest in downtown Woodlake.

The best part about working for GreenBean is being able to share your passion and knowledge of cannabis with your customers while working alongside people with that same ambition. We carry awesome products, but those products don't sell themselves. Our amazing team of cannabis consultants or "budtenders" are not only some of the greatest people to work with, they are also experts when it comes to cannabis products and desired effects.

Our cannabis consultants are trained with a key focus on helping customers better understand the differences between the wide variety of cannabis consumption methods and products available. We encourage everyone 21 and older to come and check us out in Woodlake at 515 W. Naranjo Blvd. Our hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays. You can view more about our facility, company and product menu by visiting our web site www.greenbean-pharm.com.

Q&A with Leslie Caviglia

Visalia's next—and first female—city manager answers our questions



Leslie Caviglia
Assistant City Manager

How would you describe the city of Visalia for those who are not familiar with the city?

It's a great place to live, work and play! There are so many opportunities that someone can access to create the life they want to live.

Where is your favorite place or space to visit in the city?

Any of our parks... I love the serenity of Blain Park, the vibrancy of Riverway Park, the picturesque pond at Sunset

Park, etc ... our parks are a great asset and seeing more people in the parks and on the trails recently has been a positive outcome of this difficult last year.

What initiatives or programs are you focusing the city's efforts on for the remainder of 2021 and 2022? What are you hoping to accomplish?

Continuing to work with Council to plan for the future... we need to have a comprehensive plan for infrastructure needs and quality of life amenities... and the funding to accomplish those plans so businesses and our citizens can thrive. Looking for new and differ-

ent ways to engage the community. It's a new era, and I look forward to working on new methods for involving our citizens. Working to attract and train competent, committed staff. Our staff has long been a vital Visalia asset. We'll be working on the next two year budget and will be utilizing a more participative process in the development of our budget. Our Councils have traditionally been financially prudent and I see that continuing. And, in the next couple of years, we are also going to have an amazing opportunity with the Covid recovery money. It comes with a lot of rules and audit requirements, but I'm hoping that there will be opportunities for some transformational projects/programs that will have a positive impact on the community.

What's your leadership style?

Situational. I lean towards participative, but have found that adapting to meet the needs of the current participants and situation is usually most effective

How do plan on interfacing with city council and city staff?

Frequently! Communication is key to building trust and confidence. It's kind of easier with the five Council Members that I will see frequently... it's harder given the diversity and distribution of our staff. It's something we, as an organization, need to strive to improve.

See CAVIGLIA on page 4

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

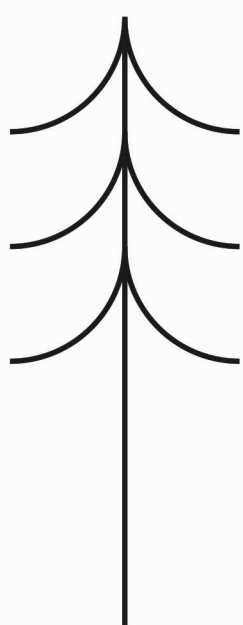
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Editor Gail Zurek
Layout The Sun-Gazette

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Topograph



SUBMITTED PHOTO



Visalia Sunset Rotary recently presented **Assistance League of Visalia (ALV)** with their Nonprofit of the Year check for over \$1,800. The money was donated by members during Cherie Barnes' presidency. Several ALV members were on hand to thank Sunset Rotary for the monetary donation at the Rawhide's Valley Strong Ballpark. Thank you, Sunset Rotary, for your help with supporting ALV philanthropic programs throughout Tulare County!

Quesadilla Gorilla announced in July that they will be expanding to a fifth location in downtown San Luis Obispo. Congratulations!

Valley Strong Credit Union recently announced the retirement of its President/CEO Steve Renock and its new President/CEO Nick Ambronsini. Ambronsini has been with Valley Strong for more than a decade and most recently served as Executive Vice President/CFO.

Congratulations to **The Darling** who celebrated their first full year of being open in July!

Visalia Rawhide offered free Hall of Fame Club tickets to individuals who received the COVID-19 vaccine through Adventist Health in July.

After nearly 40 years, **Tuocomas Federal Credit Union** said goodbye and closed their Whitendale branch location in July. The credit union will open a new branch on August 9 on Center Street in downtown Visalia.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bank of America awarded \$655,000 in grants to 18 nonprofits in Fresno, Tulare, Kings, Madera, and Merced counties that will help drive economic opportunity and upward mobility for individuals and families and put them on a path toward stability and success. Tulare County nonprofits included: **CSET, Family Services of Tulare County, Visalia Emergency Aid Council, and Visalia Rescue Mission.** Congratulations to **Bay Alarm Company** who is celebrating 75 years!

Valley Children's Healthcare is a recipient of the "Healthy Relationships Community Grant" from Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association. The \$50,000 grant will go towards mental health resiliency, specifically for those seen at Valley Children's Guilds Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Center.

Three new **Tulare County Sheriff Office** deputies were pinned by their family members during a graduation ceremony for the Tulare-Kings Counties Law Enforcement



SUBMITTED PHOTO

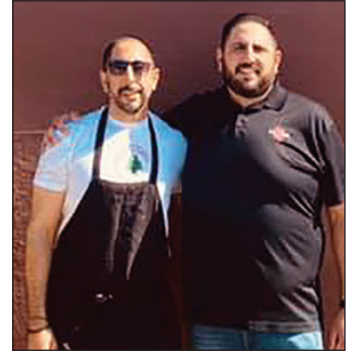
Training Academy.

Dani Blain Real Estate partnered with **Salt + Light Works' Food Truck** to food prep and serve meals to those experiencing homelessness in the Visalia Community.

Tachi Palace Casino Resort announced 600 new parking spaces available to guests and the reopening of their Coyote Entertainment Center in July.

Sierra Bancorp, parent of **Bank of the Sierra**, announced a record quarter and year to date earnings. The net interest income had a 13% increase over the second quarter in 2020.

Congratulations to **Pita Kabob** on their new PK Deli & Bakery located next door to their Downtown Gastropub! Their menu consists of traditional Mediterranean fare for breakfast and lunch consisting of deli-inspired sandwiches with a Mediterranean twist.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Visalia Rescue Mission held a graduation for their 4th Quarter Life Change Academy residents in July.

Congratulations to Merritt Wiseman, the 2021-22 **Visalia County Center Rotary Club** President.

Central Valley Community Bank announced the addition of Kelly Tenente to the Agribusiness Lending Department as Vice President, Portfolio Manager throughout the San Joaquin Valley and Greater Sacramento regions.

CANE'S

Continued from page 1

shopping area, less than three miles from the College of the Sequoias, so we are expecting to see a lot of locals and visitors alike stop in to get their chicken finger fix," regional vice president Chris Zygler said. "Now that we've found the perfect location, we will soon start hiring an enthusiastic crew...as we work towards becoming an integral part of this city."

The press release stated that they will be hiring as many as 120 local "crewmembers" for multiple positions ranging from management to hourly employment.

Raising Cane's will make its Northern California debut in Hanford on July 6 and has big plans for continued expansion throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

At Raising Cane's, it all starts with the chicken finger. The 100% premium white meat chicken tenderloins are marinated, hand-battered and cooked to order. The menu is also renowned for its craveable—some say addictive—secret-recipe Cane's sauce, crinkle-cut fries, coleslaw, Texas toast, freshly brewed sweet tea and fresh-squeezed lemonade. The company is likewise known for its commitment to active community involvement, centered on its six areas of focus: education, feeding the hungry, pet welfare, business development and entrepreneurship, active lifestyles and "everything else!"

Raising Cane's is consistently ranked among the top restaurant brands for food quality, speed of service, cleanliness, and customer service. In 2020, Sandelman ranked Raising Cane's the third-highest restaurant brand in the U.S. for overall customer satisfaction. Technomic also recently announced Cane's was voted by its customers as the top fast-casual restaurant for customer safety during the pandemic.

THE LAW AT WORK

Rules on vacation pay



By **Brett T. Abbott**
Gubler & Abbott LLP

As many of the pandemic's restrictions loosen around the country, people are ready and excited to travel. Put another way, summertime is back to being vacation time for many employees. And for employers, that means vacation pay requests. Below is a quick refresher on California's vacation pay rules.

Vacation not required There is no requirement for California employers to provide vacation time to employees. Moreover, employers are permitted to exclude certain classes of employees,

such as part-time, temporary, or probationary employees from vacation plans. To avoid misunderstandings, employers should have a clear and specific policy that states the classifications that are entitled to vacation time.

Vacation time is considered wages Under California law, earned vacation time is considered wages, and vacation time is considered earned as an employee performs work for the employer. In practice, this means that vacation pay is accrued as it is earned and cannot be forfeited unless otherwise allowed by applicable law. Upon the termination of employment, an employee must be paid all earned and unused vacation time at the employee's final rate of pay.

Reasonable Cap While an employee cannot usually forfeit vacation time once earned, an employer is permitted to place a reasonable cap on vacation benefits. Per the Labor Commissioner, policies that require an employee to take all vacation in the same year it is earned are unfair.

A cap on vacation time may set a maximum amount of vacation time an employee may accrue. Once an employee reaches the maximum or cap, they will not accrue additional vacation time until they use some of the time that has been accrued.

Controlling vacation time Employers have the right to manage vacation pursuant to the terms of their vacation policy. This right includes being able to direct how an employee requests vacation, when an employee can take vacation time, and how much an employee can take at a given time upon proper notice.

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

Happening at Arts Visalia



Arts Visalia is celebrating 25 years as Visalia's premier center for the visual arts. With the support of many throughout the years, we have fervently carried on the founding vision of a pioneering group of artists and art lovers of a permanent center for the visual arts where you can view and purchase art and participate in quality arts education classes for children and adults. Further, we provide a space where local, regional, national, and even international artists may apply to exhibit and sell their artwork.

Our current exhibition featuring the works of Kalee Appleton and Brita d'Agostino ends with a First Friday reception on Aug. 6 from 6 to 8 p.m. Kalee Appleton's work blurs the lines between drawing, sculpture, and photography to create alluring new forms and shapes that merge both 2D and 3D elements. The exquisite collage and installation works of Brita d'Agostino create a trick of the

eye that give them an appearance of a 3D form.

September's exhibition will feature the sculptural work of local artist Peggie Davis and a retrospective display of artwork by acclaimed artist Dolores Witt. These works will be on display Sept. 1 through Sept. 24 with a First Friday reception on Sept. 3 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Arts Visalia's Fall class enrollment forms are available at Arts Visalia and online. Adult Classes resume in August and Children's classes in October. Visit our website to see the wide range of classes offered for children and adults.

We are pleased to be open Wednesdays through Saturdays from noon to 5:30 p.m. Exhibitions change monthly with an opening reception on the first Friday evening of each month from 6 to 8 p.m. Check our website at www.artsvisalia.org for current and upcoming exhibitions.

The gift shop offers a delightful selection of unique, handmade artworks by local artists. Open year-round, we have gifts perfect for every style, occasion, and purpose. Shopping in our gift shop is a great way to support local artists!

Jr. CEO
DEVELOPED BY VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Fall Registration OPEN
Scholarships available
VISALIACHAMBER.ORG/CEO

Ask Jena

How can the Chamber help with a problem with my business?

If we don't have the answer, we will connect you with someone who does. As a catalyst, convener, and champion of local business, we fight for our members!

How can I participate in Oktoberfest?

The Chamber is currently accepting vendor applications for food, beer, and wine. Contact me directly.

Have a question about the Chamber?

Send me a message:
Jena@visaliachamber.org

Oktoberfest

Budweiser **VOSSLER Farms**

VISALIACHAMBER.ORG/OKTOBERFEST

BRYAN COMPANY

Demolition & Earthwork Roll-Off Service

Bryan Company is proud to be celebrating 50 years in business! We have been providing commercial and residential demolition and earthwork services since 1971. In 1986, we purchased a roll off truck and one roll off container in order to up the efficiency of our projects. That same year, Bryan Company began offering roll off services to other contractors and DIYers in Tulare, Kings and Fresno Counties. We are so very grateful to the customers who became friends over the decades and we are honored to have this opportunity to say Thank You! We appreciate your continued

support. Special thanks to our co-workers who are the backbone of this company. A great big thank you to the Chamber for continuing to support and fight for small business! We have been Chamber members for nearly 20 years and support our community via Rotary, Habitat for Humanity and many others. We are grateful to be able to give back. Thank you so very much!



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ServiceMASTER by Benevento

Jr. CEO



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Jr. CEOs looking for partners

After great success, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce is proud to bring back the Jr. CEO Fall program. Presented by ServiceMaster by Benevento, the Chamber Jr. CEO program is a five-week digital business education course that teaches kids the basics of starting their own company. Course subjects include Business Fundamentals, Cost Models, Safety & Food Prep, Marketing & Customer Service, and Savings & Money Management. Registration for the fall program is open with sessions scheduled to start in September. Students can register at visaliachamber.org/ceo.

Along with the program, the Chamber is excited to announce Hot Chocolate Day will take place on November 6, 2021. Students from the program will take what they learned and set-up their businesses across Visalia. Previously, Jr. CEOs have partnered with Chamber members to host their hot chocolate stands. As a Business Host, businesses can provide a location for a local Jr. CEO business during Hot Chocolate Day. If you are interested in being a Business Host, please contact Jena Ro-

driguez at the Visalia Chamber at jena@visaliachamber.org or (559) 734-5876.

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Four Tulare County nonprofits will receive a share of the \$655,000 in Bank of America grants

BANK OF AMERICA

Bank of America announced they were giving out \$655,000 to regional nonprofits. Four of them are in Tulare County.

Out of that heaping pile of cash, Community Services and Employment Training (CSET), Family Services of Tulare County, Visalia Emergency Aid Council and the Visalia Rescue Mission will get a share. Fourteen other nonprofits in the Central Valley will also benefit.

Local nonprofits receiving funding will help address two key factors in improving economic mobility: access to educational and workforce development services building pathways to employment, including providing resources to rebuild careers that may have been impacted by the pandemic, and basic needs fundamental to building life-long stability, including access to food, shelter and health services.

While the Fresno-Visalia region is experiencing general economic recovery, the state Employment Development Department reports that unemployment rates exceed 8.8% in the region. In addition, the Census Bureau reports that poverty levels range from 16-20%. Both are well above the statewide average.

"The strategic investment into immediate short-term and longer-term needs has been key in helping disadvantaged communities progress as society begins to safely reopen," said Mark Riley, president, Bank of America Fresno-Visalia.

"By investing in the region's incredible network of nonprofits, Bank of America provides philanthropic capital to help advance economic and social progress, enabling our community to succeed."

Specifically, many of the organizations are using the bank grants to bolster their workforce development programs in some of the region's most vulnerable neighborhoods. For example, the Fresno DRIVE Initiative will use the funds to launch an upskill training and internship program to train teens and young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds for jobs with the region's employers. The United Way of Fresno and Madera counties will use the grant to help fund its African American Leadership Program, a nine-month program focused on the personal and professional development and growth of Black leaders, while the Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation will use the support to help Hispanic-Latina women launch and expand small businesses in the region.

Other organizations receiving grants are:

- Fresno County: Boys & Girls Club, Central California Food Bank (funding also supports Tulare County), Fresno Mission, GRID Alternatives (funding also supports Madera County), Live Again Fresno, Marjaree Mason Center and Poverello House.
- Merced County: Merced

- County Food Bank
- Madera County: Madera Food Bank and Madera Rescue Mission
- Kings County: Kings Community Action Organization.

The funding also includes the commitment to Fresno's two Student Leaders this year.

The grants so far this year build on the \$1 million awarded to nonprofits in 2020 and \$500,000 in 2019. These grants are part of the company's commitment to responsible growth as it works to improve the financial lives of individuals and families, and additional grants in the region will be announced later this year. Philanthropic and volunteer investments play a key role in this effort to build thriving communities. In 2020, bank employees in the region recorded more than 4,600 volunteer hours to benefit the community in a variety of ways.

CONTACT US

Send briefs via e-mail to amanda@visaliachamber.org. Call 734-5876. Mail to: Visalia Chamber of Commerce 222 N. Garden St. #300 Visalia, CA 93291 Visit www.visaliachamber.org

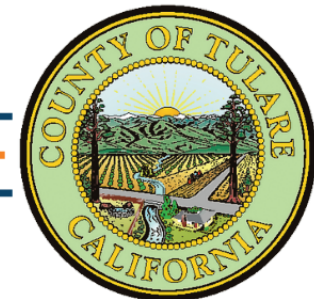


PRESENTS

The State of Tulare County

LUNCHEON, AUGUST 26 2021, 11:30AM-1:30PM

AT BELLO VITA



FOR TICKETS AND SPONSORSHIP VISIT VISALICHAMBER.ORG/STATE-OF-THE-COUNTY



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CAVIGLIA

Continued from page 2

What is some advice you'd give to someone aspiring to be a city manager? What skills should they develop or expertise should they have?

Advice... take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way! Getting a broad based understanding of the community and the organization is very valuable. Skills? The ability to assemble a great team. We're a large City with over 650 full time employees and a budget that is about a quarter of a billion dollars... having a committed, qualified team to manage the organization and provide services to our citizens is key. Also... good communication skills, analytical ability, patience and a lot of energy... it's a busy job!

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Oktoberfest highlights #loyaltolocal



News broke in April that Oktoberfest would make a comeback this year, set for September 24 at Vossler Farms. The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is excited to bring back this event that highlights some of the best of what the Central Valley has to offer. In 2019, the event sold out with 1,500 attendees showcasing the Valley's best food, wine, and beer. Event tickets went on sale in the spring and are going fast. This year's event is highly expected to sell out far in advance. The Chamber is currently accepting vendor applications. Vendor applications and event tickets can be found at visaliachamber.org/Oktoberfest.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Small cast to bring Little Women to small screens

Tulare County Office of Education Theatre Co. wraps up filming of Little Women: The Musical to stream online at a later date



Summer productions are back for the Theatre Company, but with a twist.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on performers and audiences, this year's production of Little Women: The Musical has a small cast of 10 and was filmed so it could be streamed at a later date.

Theatre Company director, Bethany Rader, said productions rarely have a small cast so it took some getting used to. However, Little Women was a perfect musical for their numbers and everyone was happy to be back in person.

"It took all of us a few moments to get back into the swing of things after not having in-person rehearsals for over a year and a half," Rader said. "But it was worth all the hoops we had to jump through and protocols we had to follow, so we could look each other in the eyes again



SUBMITTED PHOTO

TCOE Theatre Co. has been off stage for a year but will be returning with an in-person summer performance. The company has put on a variety of plays over the years giving students a chance to express their talents.



without a screen in between us. We did have to wear masks the whole time and try to stay three feet apart, which was very difficult with such an emotionally heavy show. But these students are troopers and stuck with it."

Little Women: The Musical is a coming-of-age story based on the novel, Little Women, by Louisa May Alcott. The story is about the four March sisters, their mother, and their lives while their father is away during the Civil War.

"It tells an amazing story of sticking together no matter what," Rader said. "Of a family's love, through anything. I think that's an important message right now."

The entire musical was rehearsed and filmed last week by Travis Walters and Film Owl Productions at Visalia's Ice House Theatre. The musical was filmed from start to finish several times to keep the cast in their character headspace as much as possible. There was also an audio-only recording done.

"These parents and students were amazing and stuck with us through it all," Rader said. "They wanted to be back doing what they loved, no matter how."

Principal characters

Jo March	TESSA HEMPHILL
	Redwood High School
Meg March.....	KATHY GONZALEZ
	Redwood High School
Beth March	ELISABETH SMITH
	Redwood High School
Amy March	LYRA PAEZ
	Golden West High School
Marmee March.....	PAIGE RAGAN
	Mt Whitney High School
Laurie Laurence..	BRENNAN CHURCH
	Golden West High School
John Brooke.....	JACOB LUCIO
	Redwood High School
Mr. Laurence.....	CADE GANN
	Redwood High School
Aunt March.....	EMILIE WALKER
	Alum

Thank you

TO OUR PREMIER MEMBERS

CHAMPION:



VISIONARY:



REGIONAL LEADERS:



KEYSTONE:



CORNERSTONE:

CIGNA, CSET, E.D.I.S.,
LAMP LITER INN,
M. GREEN & COMPANY,
MILLIPORESIGMA,
SOCCER CITY 1852 VISALIA,
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON

MEDIA PARTNERS:



HEALTH CARE NOTE

Delta variant sparks new vaccination urgency



By Gary K. Herbst
Chief Executive Officer
Kaweah Health

Many of us are ready for the pandemic to be over, but we cannot ignore that COVID-19 numbers are on the rise in all 50 states and the Delta variant is spreading in areas with low vaccination rates. Unfortunately, that includes Tulare County. As a health-care organization, we encourage everyone to carefully consider getting a COVID-19 vaccination.



It's good for us and our employees—those who are unvaccinated are at much higher risk of getting COVID-19 and are also far more likely to suffer severe illness, hospitalization, and death. COVID-19 vaccinations may also be best for our local economy. We can all agree that the pandemic was devastating to local business. To end up there again would be deeply disappointing. As we look at the situation unfolding around us, in California and throughout the nation, please consider getting vaccinated if you are not already, and encouraging others to do the same. It may be our best defense to avoid another shutdown so that this can be a season of recovery for local business.

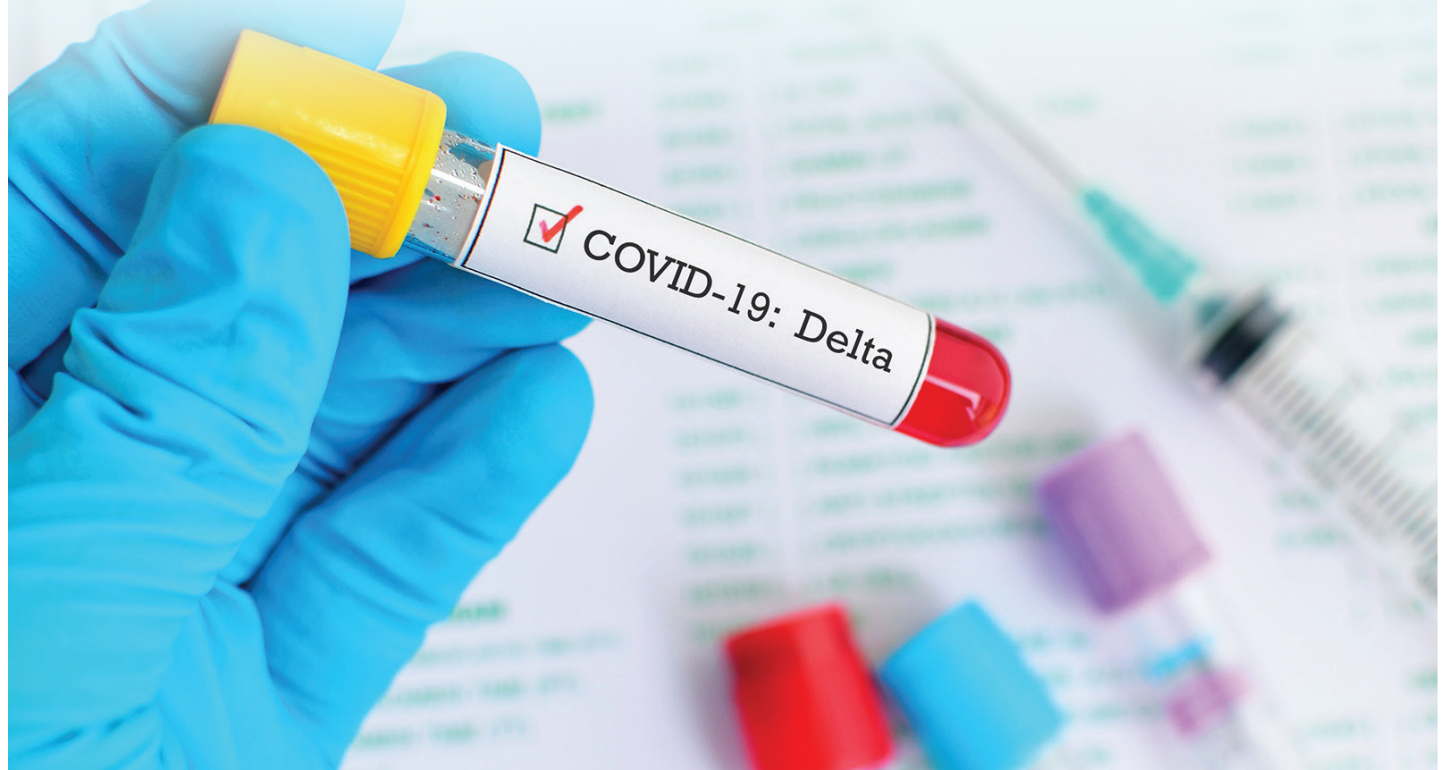
At Kaweah Health, we are not only preparing for the immediate future when it comes to caring for our community, we're also looking long-term with our master facility planning process. We're currently looking for feedback from our community on two options that our architect, RBB, has developed to solve one of our immediate needs—a newer, more modern hospital wing to replace our 1969 building, which houses 206 of Kaweah Health Medical Center's 435 inpatient hospital beds on our downtown campus. California regulations (SB1953) restrict us from using these beds for patient care after 2030 because they do not meet State earthquake standards. While it was state-of-the-art when we built it, in the same year the U.S. went to the moon, a lot has changed since then. Healthcare has dramatically changed, but the 1969 building has not. Our patients and visitors repeatedly tell us that it no longer meets their needs and our healthcare team agrees.

Since 2016, we've worked closely with experts and community members to determine whether we can bring the 1969

building into compliance with earthquake standards. We've carefully researched a number of options, but they're too costly and impractical. For example, it would cost up to \$300 million to retrofit the Mineral King Wing with structural shear walls on the exterior of the building. During construction, the building would have to close for months or years, severely reducing our capacity to care for our community. On top of that, the option would leave us with fewer hospital rooms, which are small and outdated. Retrofitting the building does not appear to be a viable option, although we continue to carefully evaluate it.

It is almost certain that we will need to replace the Mineral King Wing, not only to modernize and replace the existing 206 patient beds, but to also expand access and add an additional 34 private patient rooms. With cost and efficiency in mind, we're hoping to preserve funds by working to complete this construction project in a two-phased approach that will be more affordable and will meet our community's growing needs. Back in 2018, RBB Architects was unanimously selected in an open and transparent public bidding process for its proven track record of building lower-cost hospitals that are highly efficient to operate. Their first option would be to build two 120-bed towers, opening the first tower by 2030 and the second tower by 2040. Their second option would be to build one nine-story tower with five completed floors including 120 beds, dietary, and pharmacy by 2030; and infilling the remaining four floors (adding 120 beds) by 2040. We will be inviting you to review the two options developed by RBB soon and we look forward to your feedback.

Finally, I leave you with good news in the progress Kaweah Health's residency programs are making to bring more physicians to the Central Valley. In June, we graduated 43 resident physicians in six specialties, including our first class of anesthesiologists, as part of our sixth annual commencement ceremony. Since its inception, Kaweah Health has graduated 118 resident physicians, 45 percent of whom have remained in the Central Valley to practice medicine. We also recently welcomed a new class of 48 resident physicians in six programs—Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Psychiatry, General Surgery, Anesthesiology and a Transitional Year Program. Throughout their training, residents will take care of community members throughout the hospital and at various participating sites. Please join us in welcoming these residents to our community. Our ultimate hope is that they fall in love with the area and our community, so that after residency, they too will make the Central Valley their home.



ADOBE STOCK

Conserving water with help from Cal Water

It's often said that every drop counts. Did you know that setting mower blades to three inches encourages deeper roots and saves between 16 to 50 gallons of water per day? Every drop adds up! In fact, washing a full load of dishes can save 5 to 15 gallons of water per cycle.

As the public utility company providing water to our city, California Water Service continues to be a partner in conservation, and they offer a number of programs that Visalians can use to save water (and money).

These programs include, but are not limited to, Cal Water's Smart Landscape Tune-Up pro-

gram which provides a free consultation with an irrigation specialist to evaluate the efficiency of a resident's irrigation system. Necessary corrections are made completely free of charge, some limitations apply.

Heading inside, rebates are available for residents with high efficiency toilets, washing machines, and sprinkler nozzles and there is even a rebate for smart irrigation controllers. These Cal Water rebates may cover a portion of the cost of the devices or even pay for them entirely, programs vary.

To be eligible for these rebates, Visalians must choose a

device from the list of approved devices, provide a receipt of purchase and meet the required guidelines. And it's not just for homeowners, there are rebates available for commercial properties as well.

Free conservation kits are available too, and include items ranging from high-efficiency showerheads to toilet leak tablets.

With additional programs on the way, Cal Water continues to work with the city of Visalia to

preserve our most natural resource while providing for our residents. For information on these and coming programs, Cal Water customers can visit www.calwater.com/conservation or contact the Visalia District Customer Center at (559) 624-1600.

For the city's current watering schedule, information on conservation, landscaping ideas and more, visit www.visalia.city/savewater or call our Water Conservation Division at (559) 713-4531.



California Dairies, Inc. announces launch of farm-to-consumer sustainability effort

California Dairies, Inc. (CDI), the largest dairy farmer-owned cooperative in California and second largest in the United States, today announced the formal launch of an initiative aimed at measuring, validating, and further improving sustainable business practices.

CDI has assembled a team of experts in the field of sustainability across numerous priority areas: from environmental stewardship to employee welfare to animal husbandry and beyond. Our team has substantial knowledge of the dairy industry and expertise in sustainability from farm to consumer. Over the coming months, this team will work to quantify the current baseline status of CDI's supply chain in key areas

of sustainability, as well as lay out a roadmap of goals and targets going forward.

"Given our exclusive production in California, CDI's members understand the responsibility that comes with producing milk and have been on the leading edge of the sustainability movement," said Brad Anderson, President and Chief Executive Officer. "Together with the industry experts we have teamed up with, we

look forward to formally quantifying those efforts in the coming months in order to better communicate the work being done to our customers, consumers, and government regulators, as we chart an achievable roadmap for the future."

Today's announcement builds on a long history of focus on sustainability by CDI and our family dairy farms. Twenty years ago, before sustainability became a household term, CDI co-founded Dairy Cares, a leading non-profit pursuing research and innovation in the area of sustainable dairy practices in California. According to a 2020 study in the Journal of Dairy Science, California dairies have already reduced the amount of land (89%), water (88%), and greenhouse

gases (45%) per gallon of milk produced over a 50-year period.

More recently in 2020, CDI joined farmer cooperatives and other dairy companies around the U.S., led by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, in co-signing the 2050 Environmental Stewardship Goals, which include a goal to be carbon neutral or better by the year 2050. Today's announcement and the work being done is key to delivering on this commitment.

"CDI's membership has been leading the way in sustainable dairy farming investments, from water conservation to renewable solar energy to anaerobic digesters and more, and we continue to move as fast as technology and on-farm economics allow," said Simon Vander Woude, Chairman of CDI's Board of Directors. "This is an opportunity to showcase that hard work, while doubling down to drive innovation and further improve our environmental footprint, ensuring that our farms produce some of the most sustainable milk in the world, across all the various pillars of sustainability."

