

www.visaliachamber.org Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Vol. 42, No. 13 | January 2022

INSIDE

Law at Work: Sexual harassment training requirements

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has developed one-hour and two-hour online training courses for this purpose available in several languages. **2**

BofA awards \$1.67M to Fresno/Visalia nonprofits in 2021

Bank of America has awarded a total of \$1.67 million to local nonprofits across the Fresno/Visalia market this year – nearly \$600,000 more than its giving in 2020. **3**

SRT acquires more than 44K acres of newly-protected lands in 2021

SRT now protects in excess of 44,000 acres through nine counties, an ever-widening sphere of operation extending from Los Angeles County in the south, to Merced County in the north. **4**

CHRISTMAS TREE AT THE SPEAKEASY



EVENTS

JANUARY 27 Ambassador Monthly Meeting

Time: 8 a.m.
 Location: Visalia First

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR DATES

Coffee & Conversation with Your Chamber CEO-Facebook Live

Time: 8 a.m.

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR DATES

YPN Monthly Meet-Up

Time: 5:30 p.m.
 Location: TBA on YPN Facebook

TRAVEL WITH US

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
 JULY 5, 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



PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH JACQUES PHOTOGRAPHY

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

You're from where?



Gail Zurek
 President and CEO
 Visalia Chamber

When you aren't in Visalia, and someone asks you where you're from, what do you say? When the person you are speaking with has never been to Central California before, how do you describe it? Really, think for a minute. How would you describe our region, our community, our home?

Many know I am not originally from Visalia. I grew up south of here in San Bernardino. I went to school in Thousand Oaks and spent over a decade living in the Chicagoland area. When I am new to a community, I love asking people to describe where they live. I listen as they describe their community's "best" parts, giving subtle hints about how they define their community. People tell me more than they realize about their corner of the world.

When I arrived in Visalia nearly nine years ago (whoa! Where has the time gone?!), I repeated this process. I asked people to tell me about Visalia, the county, the region, and our part of California. The answers surprised me. They painted pictures of a community I didn't recognize. Our bustling community, to them, was a small town, sometimes without the charm I had found. Most people talked about our challenges, and few spoke of our successes. I didn't understand it then and certainly don't understand it now. Don't get me wrong, I know we have challenges, but I couldn't

understand how so many missed the beauty, wonder, success, and all our brag points.

As I travel, I am excited about the "where are you from" question. Recently I traveled with some girlfriends to Las Vegas. (Side note – I have enjoyed having Southwest Airlines fly out of Fresno. As I shared last year when they arrived, it's wonderful to be recognized as a destination by such a family travel airline.) As we piled into a car or chatted with a server, the "where are you from" question was standard.

I always find it a tremendous honor to brag about Visalia, Tulare County, and the entire South Valley. The years of collecting brag points and "did you know" about our region allowed me to share about our beautiful community. I shared how our region represents, for so many, the hard-working pioneer spirit California once was synonymous with. The beauty found in our valleys and hills is unmatched, and our local companies make a global economic impact.

Recently at a Leadership Visalia day session focusing on Economic Development, the program participants played a game challenging everyone's knowledge of our community brag points. Many participants knew more than I thought. Everyone enjoyed the game, and it sparked a wonderful conversation that began with – "I never knew" X or Y or Z.

As we begin a new year, join me in discovering and sharing about the best of this community. Let us not be shy to share our home's strength, innovation, wonder, and beauty. Be proud of this place, our neighbors, and all we are doing. We certainly want to grow and continue forward but let's not let that momentum be at the cost of celebrating and sharing all we have.

CITY UPDATE

Visalia extends redistricting process

The City of Visalia's City Council Decennial Redistricting process continues, and community members now have a new tool added to their mapping toolbox. The mapping web app Dave's Redistricting, also known as DRA 2020, is now available.

The link to Dave's Redistricting is up now at www.visalia.city/drawvisalia. Once on the digital mapping tool site, users will be asked to create an account and then can use the full suite of features available to draw new Council district lines. When completed, users will publish the map on Dave's Redistricting and then email communityfeedback@visalia.city with the name of the map that they created.

The paper based Public Participation Kits, in both English and Spanish, remain available for those wishing to draw a map, or community members can submit their own manually or digitally created map. With the digital tool now launched, the City Council Decennial Redistricting process revised timeline is posted. Drop-In Map Times will be held from 6 – 7 p.m. prior to the City Council meeting's Regular Sessions and Mapping Workshop #5 will be held at the City Council Chambers on Saturday, 1/15/22 at 10 a.m. The final deadline to submit



Redistricting maps to the City of Visalia is Thursday, 1/20/22 by 5 p.m. PST. All maps received by the deadline will be included for presentation during Public Hearing #5 on Monday, February 7, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

The full list and updated schedule of our redistricting process is online now at www.visalia.city/drawvisalia. Simultaneous Spanish language interpretation will be available at each Redistricting meeting. Please call (559) 713-4900 (TTY) 48-hours in advance of the scheduled meeting time to request signing services.

For questions, comments or map suggestions, contact Allison Mackey, Communications Manager at (559) 713-4535 or allison.mackey@visalia.city or email communityfeedback@visalia.city.

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

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

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT



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:**
- RPS Real Estate

RENEWING

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

- Business Builder Members:**
- Figaro's Mexican Grill
 - VWR, part of Avantor*
 - Wonder Valley Ranch Resort & Conference Center*

Business Connector Members:

- Health Net, LLC*
- *Berkshire Hathaway Home Services California Realty*
- El Rosal Restaurant*
- Kids2Dentist, LLC*
- Patrick L. Salazar State Farm Insurance Agency*
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT)*

- Small Business Nonprofit Members:**
- American Red Cross of Central California

* Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber 110% Club.

Why you should become a chamber ambassador

- Make your company shine! Ambassadors can participate in high-visibility networking opportunities throughout the year and are often recognized at Chamber events.
- **BREAKING NEWS...**Be one of the first to hear announcements for you and your business. Ambassadors are regularly the first to learn of new Chamber programs and events before the public.
- Sit at the table with other industry leaders! Ambassadors create business relationships

with local businesses while serving the community.

- Enjoy Breakfast on the Chamber! Ambassadors are invited to a monthly breakfast (no additional cost) to network and share updates on their companies.

Interested in becoming a Chamber Ambassador or have questions? Please contact Charlie Saponara at (559) 734-5876, charlie@visaliachamber.org

THE LAW AT WORK

Sexual harassment training requirements



By Brett T. Abbott
Gubler & Abbott LLP

In 2018, new laws were passed aimed at preventing sexual harassment in the workplace. These laws expanded employee protections to require employers who employ 5 or more employees to provide at least two hours of sexual harassment prevention training to all supervisory employees and at least one hour of sexual harassment prevention training to all nonsupervisory employees. These regulations previously only applied to employers with 50 or more employees. The initial deadline for providing new training to those employees was January 1, 2020. However, SB 778, passed on August 30, 2019, extended the deadline to January 1, 2021.

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has developed one-hour and two-hour online training courses for this purpose available in several languages.

Employers, with 5 or more employees, must provide:

- At least two hours of classroom or other effective interactive training and education regarding sexual harassment to all supervisory employees;
- At least one hour of classroom or other effective interactive training and education regarding sexual harassment to all nonsupervisory employees;
- Sexual harassment prevention training and education once every two years;

- New nonsupervisory employees with training within six months of hire; and
- New supervisory employees with training within six months of the assumption of a supervisory position.

The training must include:

- Information and practical guidance regarding the prohibition against sexual harassment under federal and state statutes;
- The prevention and correction of sexual harassment;
- The remedies available to victims of sexual harassment in employment; and
- Practical examples to instruct supervisors about prevention of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.

The training may be completed by employees individually or as part of a group presentation and may be completed in shorter segments, as long as the total hourly requirement is met. If an employer provided this training in 2019, it is not required to provide it again until 2 years after the 2019 training. Employers should keep detailed attendance records from training sessions in case the company ever needs to prove compliance.

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

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Name: Nick Huerta
Company: The Pickled Deli
Title: Owner

The Pickled Deli is a locally owned, and independently operated quick service restaurant. Located in the heart of the Central Valley, I value Visalia as a special place. I was born in Visalia and it is still home to many of my family and friends. I am a retired 20 year Army combat veteran who had several years of experience owning and operating a sandwich franchise, before deciding to venture on my own in January of 2020. With the support of the community of Visalia, I survived the toughest times of the pandemic. My team and I are committed to high-quality sides, soups, salads, and toasted sandwiches. My commitment to fresh ingredients and superior guest service is what you expect from a premium deli.

Recently we created a Veteran sponsorship program to allow people to sponsor a Veteran with a free meal on Veterans Day. Over 120 meals were sponsored and remaining proceeds were donated to A Combat Veterans Hope (ACVH) a local none profit organization supporting Veterans and their families.

Our delicious bread is delivered fresh from Basque Baker

out of Fresno. Our fried pickles are very unique and you'll only find them at our deli.

I believe connecting people through delicious food, helps build a community. There are very few independent quick service restaurant around. Chains and franchises seem to overpower so many mom & pop establishments.

The best part of working at the deli is the team atmosphere. We never expect perfection from anyone but it's the effort and accountability we strive for that make our deli family special.

The chamber has given me so many tools and resources that has definitely benefited my business. I'm not just a paying member to them, they value a personal relationship and influence my business to have a positive effect on the community we both serve and support.

My goal is to be Visalia's preferred deli. A place that is a reflection of the amazing community of Visalia. My independence gives me the ability to reinvest in the community, support that high school volleyball team or little league baseball team. It's a privilege to be able to give back to the community we serve and that supports the deli.



ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Business Update is the official monthly publication of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, 222 N. Garden St., Ste. 300, Visalia CA 93291, (559) 734-5876. Periodicals, Postage Paid at Visalia, CA 93277; Publication No. USPS 494-660. Annual Subscription rate \$15. Postmaster: Send address changes to Visalia Chamber of Commerce, 222 N. Garden St., Ste. 300, Visalia, CA 93291. Advertising information, call Jena at (559) 734-5976 or email info@visaliachamber.org.

Editor Gail Zurek
Layout The Sun-Gazette

©2020, Visalia Chamber of Commerce. All rights reserved. Reproduction by any means of the entire contents or any portion of this publication without written permission is prohibited. The appearance of any advertisements in the publication does not constitute support or endorsement for any product, person, cause, business, or organization named therein, unless specifically noted otherwise in the advertisement.

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

CHRISTMAS TREE AT THE SPEAKEASY

AT: &

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

THANK YOU TO OUR VENDORS

Tulare County Library launched the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten reading challenge for adults and their children ages 0-5. Participants can stop by their local library branch to register and pick up a reading log, or use the Beanstack app or website to log reading online.

Congratulations to **The Painted Table** who celebrated in December their 15th Anniversary!

Bank of the Sierra named Matt Dusi as Agricultural and Commercial Lending President. His responsibilities will include leadership of the Bank's agricultural and commercial lending teams.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Happy Trails Riding Academy partnered with La Raza Motorcycle Club to provide over 100 toys to needy families.

Valley Oaks Golf Course recently became the first golf course in California to be designated a Certified Autism Center (CAC). The CAC designation is awarded by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) to organizations that complete position-specific training and certification to help staff better communicate and serve visitors with autism and sensory sensitivities.



Century 21 Jordan-Link & Company's team volunteered for 2021 Visalia Jingle Bell Run for Toys for Tots.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tulare County Board of Supervisors appointed Joseph Halford as the Director of Tulare County Information & Communications Technology (TCICT).

Bank of America names Marjaree Mason Center (MMC) as a Neighborhood Champion to help continue serving victims of domestic violence in Fresno County. A \$50,000 grant along with the award will allow MMC to participate in virtual leadership training delivered by experts in the nonprofit sector.

Congratulations to **Comfort Suites-Downtown and Hampton Inn** who recently became Certified Autism Centers. Each team completed autism training and certification to help build a more inclusive community as part of the **Visit Visalia** movement to be come a Certified Autism Designation.

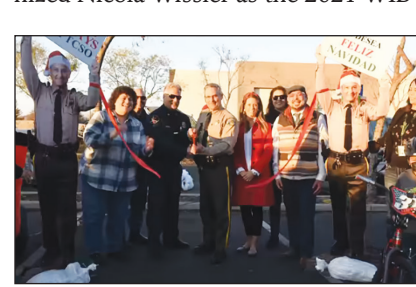


SUBMITTED PHOTO

KSEE 24 and KGPE 47 have open nominations for Woman of the Year. Based on select criteria such as community contributions, self-achievement and impact on families each Nexstar market will select four local women to be considered. In April, one woman in

each market will be announced as a finalist and a national winner will be featured and announced on a remarkable Women special produced by KTLA in Los Angeles.

Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County recognized Nicola Wissler as the 2021 WIB Employee of the year.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sheriff Mike Boudreaux opened the 2nd annual **TCSO Pal Winter Wonderland Friday** with a ribbon cutting and PAL Bike giveaway.

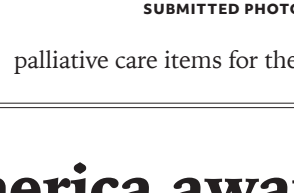
Bethlehem Center hosted a Christmas toy and food giveaway in December.

CSET is recruiting local volunteers to assist with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA). VITA provides tax preparation and electronic filing services at no cost to Tulare County households with less than \$54,000 annual income.

Board of Trustees of **Visalia Unified School District** provisionally appointed Randy Villegas as Trustee for Area 6 during a special board meeting in November.

Macy's partnered with **Family Builders Foster Care** and Central Valley Vietnam Veterans for a Christmas toy drive in December.

Team members of California Dairies donated time to assist **Salt & Light Works** with assembling items for their yard sale to prepping palliative care items for their food truck.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

LEADERSHIP VISALIA VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Leadership Day Session Report

December 10th was the third day-session of the 2021-2022 Leadership Visalia program. It was a genuinely enlightening day of speakers and group activities based around the topic of Economic Development. The session facilitators were Lisa Lynch, North Visalia Branch Manger of Valley Strong Credit Union, and Michael Seaward, General Manager of The Darling Hotel.

Inside the conference room of the beautiful The Darling Hotel, the morning started with networking, followed by our first speakers of the day, Nancy Lockwood and Nathan Ahle. Nancy Lockwood is the owner of The Lockwood Agency with a background as City Editor for the Visalia Times-Delta. She currently serves as the Executive director of Visalia Economic Development Corporation. Nathan Ahle is the CEO of the Tulare County Economic Development Corporation. Before starting his current position, he served as the President and CEO of the Fresno Chamber of Commerce. Both speakers provided insight into the importance of strategically marketing Visalia as a great fit for businesses build new facilities and/or relocate to existing locations within the City of Visalia. Currently, there is a specific push toward the city's rapidly growing industrial park.

Our following speakers were Devon Jones, the Economic Development Manager of the City of Visalia, and Adam Peck, the Executive Director of Tulare county Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and a member of the City of Visalia Planning Commission. Their discussions centered around small to extensive City planning strategies, how to use existing development to best serve the community, and plans for future growth. A good portion of the discussion was centered around how the county workforce is an integral part of economic development. Though there is a nation-wide shortage of workers overall, we learned that Tulare County has some of the best workforce numbers in the state. Much of that workforce has gravitated toward new opportunities at the recently built fulfillment centers of Amazon and UPS. Visalia's Industrial Park has become a major catalyst of continued economic development for the City. With several phases of the industrial park secured, many more site plans are in the beginning stages of development, as well as infrastructure projects such as the widening of Rigin Ave. to allow for better traffic flow for workers and delivery trucks.

The class enjoyed lunch at the Elderwood restaurant, located on the rooftop of The Darling Hotel, a unique experience located in the heart of Visalia's downtown. After lunch, the day session continued with a panel of local business owners and representatives comprised of Jonathan Anderson, owner of Component Coffee Lab, Sam Sigal, owner of Visalia Rawhide, Danielle Avila, CEO of 4-Creeks Inc., and Kris Lareau, Area Developer for Office Pride. Our discussion was wide ranging, tackling topics such as challenges with current workforce trends, how Covid required drastic changes that forced small to large businesses to venture into new markets and strategies, and how they plan on continuing to



From The Hit TV Show on E! Entertainment

FEB 18th

An Evening of HOPE AND HEALING

Plus Live Audience Readings and Interactive Q&A

TYLER HENRY

HOLLYWOOD MEDIUM

THE PEOPLES CASINO

800.903.3353 • eaglemtncasino.com

EAGLE MOUNTAIN CASINO

Ask Jena

What does the Chamber have planned for this year?

Our team is constantly busy planning initiatives, programs, and events for members and the community to take advantage of. Visit visaliachamber.org and sign-up for updates!

Will there be a Jr. CEO program this spring?

The spring Jr. CEO program is back! Stay tuned for future announcements and sign-up at visaliachamber.org for updates.

Have a question about the Chamber?

Send me a message: Jena@visaliachamber.org

Bank of America awards \$1.67M to Fresno/Visalia nonprofits in 2021

Philanthropic grants and donations addressed needs related to youth employment, protecting people from COVID-19, racial justice and equity

BANK OF AMERICA

As part of its commitment to strengthening communities by addressing critical needs that help advance racial equality and economic opportunity, Bank of America has awarded a total of \$1.67 million to local nonprofits across the Fresno/Visalia market this year – nearly \$600,000 more than its giving in 2020.

With a particular focus on closing the equity and wealth gaps in communities of color and other disadvantaged populations disproportionately impacted by the prolonged pandemic, Bank of America's local giving this year was directed to alleviate numerous impacts of COVID-19.

Among the 23 local nonprofits receiving grants were Fresno DRIVE for a new training and paid internship program for at-risk teens and young adults; the United Way of Fresno and Madera Counties for its African American Leadership Program; the Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation for its Hispanic-Latina women small business program; and

the Marjaree Mason Center to assist abused women and children.

"While the pandemic has taken a toll on us all, there's no doubt it has had a disproportionate impact on the communities already grappling with the effects of economic and social inequality. The private sector has a responsibility to provide support that can serve as a catalyst to help advance equity and economic opportunity for everyone," said Mark Riley, president, Bank of America Fresno/Visalia market.

In addition, the bank donated over 1.2 million pieces of Personal Protection Equipment masks, gloves and sanitizer bottles in under-resourced communities this year this year, distributed free flu vaccine vouchers to nonprofits through a partnership with CVS Pharmacy, and local bank employees volunteered more than 7,400 hours during 2021.

As an essential business, Bank of America also invested in the health and economic stability of its own teammates this year by raising its minimum hourly pay to \$21 as a next step in the company's plans to increase hourly pay to \$25 by 2025.

Giving Tuesday campaign a success

On Nov. 30, people around the world came together to make an impact and celebrate generosity. Tulare County was no exception. This was a special year in Tulare County, as 12 local nonprofit organizations partnered together to support one another and raise awareness of the Giving Tuesday movement through the #GiveWhereYouLiveTC community campaign.

"Giving Tuesday was a tremendous success, a historical day for our community," shared Carla Calhoun. "Hundreds of millions of people were impacted globally by this movement, including the people of Tulare County who will benefit tremendously in their time of need. #GiveWhereYouLiveTC extends its sincere gratitude to everyone who gave so generously this season - Thank you!"

Throughout the day, these nonprofit organizations and their supporters shared photos and stories online, showing the positive impact everyday actions have on our community. Recent



years have shown us all that local generosity and community action are powerful forces for good, especially in turbulent times. In Tulare County, we have witnessed firsthand the remarkable impact that occurs when our community comes together to support and give generously. We saw this happen when our region needed it the most - during the pandemic, wildfires, drought, and freezes. Even in times of economic uncertainty, we each have a deep reserve of generosity, which we can deploy in myriad ways to make a difference—your time, your kindness, your skills, your voice are all things you can give in addition to charitable donations.

The spirit of giving continues! There are so many ways you can support this important work beyond Giving Tuesday and keep the spirit of generosity going through the holiday season and

all year long. Whether it's helping a neighbor, advocating for an issue, sharing a skill, or giving to causes — everyone has something to give and every act of generosity counts.

Join the fun of giving! This year, several Tulare County nonprofit organizations worked together to spread the word about Giving Tuesday. These wonderful organizations help improve the quality of life for our community and make Tulare County a better place every day. This year United Way of Tulare County, Community Services Employment Training (CSET), Sequoia Riverlands Trust, Arts Visalia, ProYouth, CASA of Tulare County, Family Services of Tulare County, Proteus Inc., Read for Life, Grandma's House, Rural Communities Resource Center, and the Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council have partnered together for the Giving Tuesday Community Campaign in Tulare County. Visit www.unitedwaytc.org/giving-tuesday to learn more.

We travel not to escape life but for life not to escape us

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES with THE CHAMBER

TRIPS PROVIDED BY:

COLLETTE VACATIONS; CST#: 2006766-20

CHAMBER EXPLORATIONS; CST#: 2048841.40

MAYFLOWER TOURS; CST#: 2044099-20

visaliachamber.org/travel

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:



SRT adds newly-protected lands in 2021 for more than 44K-acre total



By Aaron Collins
SRT Director of Marketing and Communications

A second year of pandemic along with economic and climate uncertainties proved no deterrent for Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) in gaining newly protected lands in 2021.

SRT now protects in excess of 44,000 acres through nine counties, an ever-widening sphere of operation extending from Los Angeles County in the south, to Merced County in the north. East to west, the Mojave Desert and San Luis Obispo County are the boundaries.

Closest to home in Tulare County, SRT acquired two agricultural conservation easements in 2021. Funded through the Department of Conservation Agricultural Land Mitigation Grant Program, the new acquisitions conserve 235 acres of prime farmland. SRT worked with Landowners James Moore in northern Tulare County, and Whitten Farms, LLC and Woodville Farms, LLC, near Woodville. "Protecting this farmland in perpetuity helps to assure a sustainable food source for future generations," said SRT Director of Land Acquisitions Courtney Barnes.

Additionally, SRT acquired



PHOTOS BY AUSTIN FONTANILLA

Above: The Moore farm was among ag lands newly conserved by SRT in 2021. Below: Antelope Plains near the Carrizo Plain National Monument are among the newly conserved lands in 2021.



two conservation easements in 2021 via its ongoing collaboration with Westervelt Ecological Services. The area conserved is located in Kern County and will insure the protection of 675 acres of high-quality natural, established, restored and/or enhanced habitat for blunt-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia si/a*), Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratoides nitratoides*), and San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*). Por-

tions of the land contain valley sink/saltbrush scrub and preserved waters of the United States including alkali pool, playa pool, alkali swale, and ditch habitats.

SRT closes out 2021 holding 85 ag conservation and other easements around the region.

With funding from the Resource Legacy Fund (RLF) Grant, SRT acquired eight parcels of land totaling 75 acres within the Carrizo Plain National Monument. These lands will become a part of the CPNM. CPNM is home to diverse communities of wildlife and plant species including several listed as threatened or endangered and is an area culturally important to Native Americans.

To date SRT has worked to conserve more than 44,000 acres.

"What makes my job at SRT so rewarding is helping Farmers protect our valuable agricultural lands, while giving them the financial tools needed to sustain their operations for future generations," Barnes said. With gains accruing despite the ongoing covid-related hardship in Central California, SRT is grateful for Barnes continuing success and the farmers and ranchers who see the value of protecting their ag land for the future.

LEADERSHIP

Continued from page 3

implement some of those strategies moving forward.

The class then met up at Component Coffee Lab to tour the facility and learn more about the business and its processes from owner John Anderson. It was eye-opening to see how unique the coffee beans were, from selection to process. Jonathan gave information on how extensive the process is and how much pride their staff has in providing a unique coffee experience. Not too long ago, Component Coffee Lab broke ground on a new location, which is scheduled to open in the city of Tulare in 2022.

After the class was treated to delicious coffee, Gail Zurek, President and CEO of Visalia Cham-

ber of Commerce, provided us with tools and resources that we as individuals can use to empower our entrepreneurs and small businesses that are the roots of a thriving community like Visalia.

The last activity of the day was in small groups that focused on the potential economic development planning within the City of Visalia. We were tasked with quickly forming a marketing plan to present to a business thinking about adding a location to Visalia. How do we market Visalia to Chick-fil-A, Trader Joe's, etc.? What locations would work best to build out a new store? What does the traffic and future growth of those locations look like? Those are just a few examples of the questions one needs to ask and solve in order to drive further development within our city.

A Strategic Marketing & Design Company in Visalia, California.

Learn more at tpgrph.com

Topograph

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

there's something for everyone