

www.visaliachamber.org Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Vol. 42, No. 19 | July 2022

INSIDE

Reimbursing employee expenses

Employees are occasionally asked to dip into their own pockets to make legitimate business purchases. This may take form of filling up the employee's car with gas or buying office supplies. **2**

Business and marketing experts to speak

Momentum Broadcasting, home to radio station favorites like MY97.5 and Classic Rock 99.7, is hosting a summer speaker series featuring experts in marketing, sales and advertising. **3**

PHOTOS ON PAGE 4! Chamber Awards 2022

EVENTS

JULY 21 The State of Tulare County Luncheon

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

JUNE 27 2022 Harassment Seminar

Time: 7:30 a.m.
Location: Lamp Liter Inn

JULY 28 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.

TRAVEL WITH US

SEPTEMBER 3-11, 2022 Western Canada's Rockies, Lakes & Wine Country

OCTOBER 5-12, 2022 New England Rails & Trails

OCTOBER 23-27, 2022 Spotlight on San Antonio

OCTOBER 29-NOVEMBER 6, 2022 Wonders of the Danube River Cruise

NOVEMBER 1-8, 2022 Irish Discovery

DECEMBER 1-5, 2022 Christmas Markets of Montreal & Quebec City

FEBRUARY 21-28, 2023 Ecuador & Galapagos Islands Cruise

APRIL 19-28, 2023 Holland Windmills, Waterways & Tulips River Cruise

MAY 2-10, 2023 Athens & The Greek Islands

MAY 7-22, 2023 Flavors of Portugal & Spain

JULY 19-28, 2023 Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice



Travel provided by:

Collette Vacations
CST #2006766-20

Chamber Explorations
CST #2048841-40

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

Visalia EDC names Nicotero as new exec

Warehouse and distribution veteran Bruce Nicotero takes over as executive director for the Visalia Economic Development Corporation, which markets the Visalia Industrial Park



STAFF REPORT

In the last 20 years, the Visalia Industrial Park has become a hub for distribution warehouses on the West Coast. No one locally understands the warehousing and distribution industry better than Bruce Nicotero, who has more than 50 years of experience in the sector, making him an obvious choice to become the executive to deliver on the industrial park's continued expansion.

The Visalia Economic Development Corporation (VEDC), the organization in charge of marketing the industrial park to potential tenants, named Nicotero its new executive director last week. Nicotero was general manager of the West Coast distribution center for Jo-Ann Stores, the world's largest fabric and craft retailer. Nicotero has more than 50 years of experience in the warehousing, logistics and distribution industry. He was part of the team that set up the distribution center in Visalia, Jo-Ann's first facility west of the Mississippi when it was built in 2001, where Nicotero managed the distribution of 30,000 unique items to thousands of Jo-Ann Fabrics locations.

"I am excited and humbled to be chosen by the board of directors to become the executive director of the Visalia Economic Development Corporation," Nicotero said. "I am looking forward to working with local businesses, especially those in the Visalia Industrial Park, as well as the city staff, the Workforce Investment Board, local educators and utility providers to enhance the economic benefits for all. My experience managing several industrial facilities throughout my career will allow me to use my perspective



PHOTO BY RIGOBERTO MORAN

The Visalia Industrial Park sign on Riggan denotes the key place where warehouses have expanded in the county.

to drive improvements and fulfill the mission and vision of the VEDC."

Initially, Nancy Lockwood and The Lockwood Agency will continue to serve as the executive director, aiding and on-boarding Nicotero with the knowledge and tools to efficiently transition him into the position. Lockwood has guided the organization since 2009. Prior to her tenure, the VEDC was led by Jim Claybaugh. With her retirement, we knew those would be hard shoes to fill.

"With her retirement, we knew those would be hard shoes to fill," said Matt Seals, incoming chair of the VEDC board. "We welcome Bruce's experience and leadership to the VEDC at a time of transition for the organization."

Nicotero was selected from 16 candidates identified by the Search Committee, said Seals. The committee narrowed the applicants to seven qualified individuals, who then provided answers to detailed follow-up questions. In addition to the published request for proposals

and job description, detailed follow-up questions were sent to the applicants in order to provide a more detailed candidate analysis. Interviews were conducted in late May with a final decision and selection made last week.

Nicotero has worked in the industrial park for more than two decades and had previously served as chair of the Industrial Advisory Board for the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County and was involved with the South Valley Industrial Collaborative. Nicotero will be tasked with implementing the strategic plan drafted by the VEDC which looks at all facets of economic development for the city of Visalia, specifically focusing on retention and workforce development of the existing business base in the industrial park.

The industrial park has become a hub for distribution centers, fulfillment centers and warehouses for many companies in recent years. In addition to Jo-Ann Stores, the industrial park is home to distribution

centers for Amazon, Ace Hardware, UPS, VF Outdoor, VWR, Hilti USA, Pacific Stahl, Inc., Heiland Electronics, MWI Veterinary Supply, Millipore Sigma, Service Spring Corp. Distribution centers in the Visalia Industrial Park ship overnight to 95 million customers within a 300-mile radius in Southern California, Sacramento and the Bay Area. The industrial park offers quick access to Highway 99, the largest north-south trucking corridor in the nation's largest state, an available labor force of 62,000 workers, affordable land for development, and a city with a business-friendly climate that seeks to remove barriers to growth and expansion.

The VEDC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization formed in 1996 to help businesses expand and create jobs. Members support the work of the VEDC through annual dues, with additional financial support from the city of Visalia. For more information on the Visalia Economic Development Corporation, contact Matt Seals at matt.seals@sealsconstruction.com.



CITY UPDATE

Summer staycation fun

Through the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it can be easy to forget the vibrant opportunities right here in Visalia. If you're looking for summer staycation ideas, welcoming guests into town, or entertaining business colleagues, look no further than our own backyard!

From outdoor adventure to arts and entertainment, there is no shortage of opportunity. You are invited to experience the beauty, culture, and unique flavor of our city.

Visit Visalia, the city's Convention & Visitors Bureau, can help you see our city with fresh eyes and uncover adventure at just about every corner.

Treat yourself to an evening out on the town, savor the city's fresh from the farm cuisine at a sidewalk cafe or fill the afternoon strolling unique shops and galleries.

We're fortunate to call the richest agricultural region in the United States home, and the tours can be delicious! Featured itineraries on visitvisalia.com include Ler's Taco 'bout It! A Walking Taco Tour, follow the "Visalia: Then and Now" self-guided walking tour to learn about our rich history, Day Trip to Sequoia National Park (Sequoia Shuttle ride anyone?), Farm to Fork Experiences and many, many more.

If it's special events you're looking for, check out Visit Visalia's Upcoming Events & Activities section on their website.

See STAYCATION on page 6



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The secret force



Gail Zurek
President and CEO
Visalia Chamber

There's a saying that 'behind a successful person is a strong partner.' To be successful, you can't do it alone; you need strong partners. This is certainly true at your Visalia Chamber. Our wild success is because of the very strong partners we have within our community.

Most notably, our ambassadors. At the Business Connector level, a member can send a staff member to the ambassador's monthly meeting, have access to specialized announcements and invitations, and make connections with other businesses. If a CEO doesn't attend, they typically nominate their marketing/community relations/salespeople to join the ambassadors. This group connects their business to the wider Visalia Community and, in turn, helps their business. There are plenty of examples of that very thing happening. It helps both businesses that make the connection and reinforces the value the Chamber brings as a convener.

But, there really is so much more to the Ambassadors. They are a force within the Chamber.

They literally are the smiling face and warm handshake at events. They help guide new members through a ribbon-cutting ceremony. They deliver membership anniversary certificates. They're the first to jump in and help the Chamber when we need volunteers. Ambassadors are the physical manifestation of what it means to be a part of this Chamber, a warm friend who is here to help.

This warm and fun group meets monthly for breakfast. There's a speaker, some updates, and opportunities to become more involved in this community.

But larger than the agenda, the Ambassador Breakfast reminds you that you aren't doing business alone. There is a team of people here to support you, support our Chamber, and make our community thrive.

If you see an Ambassador—thank them. Their work makes our Chamber special, gives us heart, and helps us be successful. Yes, they are promoting their businesses, but they're doing that in a way to help us all be stronger.

If you want to be an Ambassador—thank you! We need more people with heart to be the warm handshakes, smiling faces, and community that helps each other. If you are not yet at the Business Connector level, Charlie in our office can help you upgrade. If you need a reminder to come to the breakfast, Jena will help get you on the email list.

Thank you, Ambassadors, for all you do—we couldn't do it without you!



PHOTOS BY SHARON ALLISON-CROOK (LEAD AMBASSADOR)



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 Member:

- Lee's Air, Plumbing, & Heating

Small Business Members:

- Grapevine MSP LLC
- Elite Restoration by Villegas

RENEWING

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

Visionary Member:

- SinglePoint Outsourcing, Inc.*

Regional Member:

- Tucoemas Federal Credit Union

Community Investor Members:

- Gateway Financial Planning Group

- KRC Safety Co., Inc.
- Vintage Press Restaurant
- Wyndham Visalia

Business Builder Members:

- City of Visalia
- National University

Business Connector Members:

- Bank of America - Main St.
- Century 21 Jordan-Link & Company*
- Educational Employees Credit Union
- Franey's Carpet One Floor & Home Design Center*
- Infinite Heart Hospice, LLC*
- Miller Memorial Chapel
- Oak View Apartment Homes*
- Paradise Pools Inc.
- Park Visalia*
- Prestige Assisted Living*
- Re/Max Visalia
- Round Table Pizza*
- Ryan Purkiss - Thiesen-Dueker Financial Consulting Group
- ServiceMaster by Benevento
- Tachi Palace Casino Resort

- Tulare Outlets
- Unified Screening & Crushing - California
- United Wholesale Lumber Company
- Visalia Ceramic Tile, Inc.*
- Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County

Small Business Members:

- Bay Alarm Company*
- Burgundy House Apartments*
- Bruce Evans Property Management, Inc.*
- Care at the Courtyard
- Chimienti & Associates Insurance Services*
- Clark Pest Control*
- Collette Vacations
- CRS Farming, LLC*
- Derrel's Mini Storage
- Gong Cha
- Hocking, Denton, Palmquist & Company
- Houk & Hornburg Inc.
- Housing Authority of Tulare County
- Jim's Formal Wear*

- J.R. Nelson's Roofing, Inc.*
- Kentucky Fried Chicken - Noble
- KFSN - TV Channel 30
- McAuliff & Wood Orthodontic Specialists*
- Nothing Bundt Cakes
- Peck Planning and Development*
- Personal Express Insurance*
- Screw Conveyor Corporation*
- Smokin Barrel Firearms*
- Super 8 Motel
- Trilotech
- Tulare County District Attorney
- Valley Industrial & Family Medical Group
- Visalia Eye Center
- Visalia Cyclery
- Visalia Senior Housing
- ZenBusiness

Business Builder Nonprofit Members:

- Visalia Emergency Aid Council (VEAC)*



Business Connector Nonprofit Members:

- ProYouth
- Sequoia Parks Conservancy
- Visalia Rescue Mission*

Small Business Nonprofit Members:

- FoodLink for Tulare County, Inc.*
- Proteus, Inc. Employment & Training
- Sequoia Symphony Orchestra
- Soroptimist International Of Visalia*
- Tulare-Kings Right To Life
- Turning Point of Central California, Inc.

* Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber 110% Club.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Name: Gilbert Brito and Lana Fahoum
Company: PAW Estate Rescue and Shelter, Inc
Title: President and Vice President

Both licensed Realtors by trade, but devout dog lovers by nature, Gil and Lana Fahoum founded and incorporated PAW Estate Rescue & Shelter, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit, foster-based dog rescue, in 2020. The organization started in response to the overwhelming need of dog rescue due to an increased number of strays, an influx of owner surrenders, and overcrowded shelters euthanizing for space.

In 2021 PAW Estate was able to partake in the rescue of 281 dogs and puppies and ten kittens. While we are a dog rescue, our team could not turn a blind eye to the kittens in need of rescue. We rescue, rehabilitate, fix, chip, and vaccinate all dogs while finding them wonderful fur-ever homes!

Our team continues to rescue even though donations may decrease. In 2021, we received \$35,678 in donations but had \$39,752 in veterinary care alone. \$39,752 does not include additional costs for food, supplies, transport, marketing, etc. Please visit pawestaterescue.org for more information on how to support.

PAW Estate is in the need of a rescue transport van. Currently we use personal vehicles or rentals that require multiple trips to one event. It has become inefficient and costly to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

the organization. At this time, PAW Estate is looking for a donated van or donations to purchase a vehicle.

PAW Estate's mission of helping dogs in need and "giving them a doggone chance"

began three years prior when Gil and Lana assisted local rescuers in saving the life of a dog named Cooper who was on the euthanasia list at a local shelter. Cooper became their first foster and after spending a signifi-

cant amount of time with Lana and Gil, Cooper was transferred to a rescue organization based out of Davis, California to help place him in his fur-ever home. Since this first rescue, together, they have saved over 200 dogs and counting!

Our biggest involvement in the local community comes from being a resource for strays, owner surrenders, and death row dogs but beyond that we offer free spay/neuter, chip, and vaccination services to those in need.

Currently, PAW Estate does not have employees, but looks forward to expanding. The best part of volunteering for our organization is watching a dog transform from a defeated soul into a loving family friend. Together — the PAWSibilities are endless!

We look forward to connecting with fellow Chamber members and sharing our story!

We never seem to have enough donations to meet the demand of the rescue needs. As a newer organization, we are hopeful to make the connections with local businesses and community members to achieve our mission: save as many dogs as possible — "giving them a doggone chance" at a great life!

VISALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent Shrum's Entry Plan



KIRK SHRUM

During the meeting of the Visalia Unified School District Board of Trustees on June 14, 2022, Superintendent Kirk Shrum presented his entry plan. The Superintendent's Entry Plan lays out three areas on which Mr. Shrum will focus during his first ninety days as VUSD superintendent. The themes surrounding the plan's

strategy are Engage, Examine, and Envision.

The first strategy within the entry plan focuses on engagement. Superintendent Shrum has created engagement forums to meet with staff, parents, and community members

See SHRUM on page 5

THE LAW AT WORK

Reimbursing employee expenses



GUBLER & ABBOTT ATTORNEYS AT LAW

By Brett T. Abbott
 Gubler & Abbott LLP

Employees are occasionally asked to dip into their own pockets to make legitimate business purchases. This may take form of filling up the employee's car with gas or buying office supplies. Surely many reading this article have asked an employee to pick up a birthday cake or flowers for another employee? So, when employees use their own money for business needs, what is the obligation of the employer?

Labor Code section 2802 is clear: "An employer shall indemnify his or her employee for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her duties, or of his or her obedience to the directions of the employer..." This usually takes the form of mileage, travel, and dining expenses.

How do I reimburse for mileage? Reimbursing employees for fuel is very common. And we all know that gas prices can fluctuate dramatically. Remember when gas was under \$5 a gallon? Fortunately, employers have a guide when reimbursing employers for their mileage. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issues a standard mileage rate that fluctuates based on gas and other travel prices. The current IRS standard mileage rate is 58.5 cents per mile (this amount is fixed by Congress). The rate usually adjusts each January.

When do I have to reimburse my employees? Expense reimbursements are not considered wages. As such, wage laws, such as those regulating the time and place of payment, do not apply to expense reimbursements. Therefore, employers are free to make expense reimbursements on any reasonable schedule. Many employers choose to reimburse employees once a month.

Are expenses due immediately on termination? When an employee is terminated, all wages (including vacation) are due immediately. However, with expenses, it's not so simple. Employees often leave the job without submitting all final expense reports, making it impossible to calculate outstanding reimbursement in a final paycheck. Thus, employers should ask employees to turn in expense reimbursement requests as soon as possible and process them on a customary schedule. Remember that an employee's failure to promptly turn in expense reimbursement requests does not excuse an employer from responsibility to pay. A recent California court decision indicates that employees have three years to submit expenses for reimbursement.

In conclusion, while the rules regarding employee expenses

See LAW on page 6

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

©2022, 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

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

JOIN US FOR AN UPCOMING TRAVEL SLIDESHOWS!

JULY 13 & AUGUST 10, 2022

VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON

LEARN MORE :visaliachamber.org/travel

JOIN US



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

August 4, 2022
4:00pm - 6:00pm

RSVP:visaliachamber.org/bah

HOSTED BY



4Creeks partnered with the Central California Blood Center to host a blood drive on June 30th.

Quail Park on Cypress hosted a car show and food and vendor event in June.

Central Valley Community Bank named Lisa Hollingshead as Vice President, Relationships Manager.



LISA HOLLINGSHEAD

completed 14 years as Lead Pastors and transition to the role of Global Pastors.

Momentum Broadcasting radio stations 99.7 Classic Rock and MY97.5fm hosted the first of a four-part Summer Speaker Series featuring guest speaker Bob Hoffman. Hoffman covered both legacy and digital advertising. The series continues through the summer with Jeff Schmidt on branding in July.

Tachi Palace Casino Resort hosted a ribbon cutting in June to commemorate the grand opening of the High Limit Room. Located on the 3rd floor of the Casino, the High Limit Room includes both guest-favorite machines at higher denominations, exclusive new games, customized oversized chairs, 12 65" televisions, dedicated restrooms, and food and beverage servers with extensive menus including everything from light snacks to restaurant op-



tions. The fully customized room is designed with an Art Deco flair.

The Tulare County Sheriff's Department participated at **United Way of Tulare County's** 2022 Power of the Purse event on June 10th. The fundraiser supports Tulare County's 211 Program, a non-emergency line which connects community members with resources, services, and opportunities; College Access Initiative; and annual grants for Tulare County nonprofits.



TULARE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Roller Towne started their Summer camps with half-day and full-day options.

Visalia Transit and the **Visalia Rawhide** partnered on June 16th for Rider Appreciate Night at Valley Strong Ballpark.

The **Tulare County Board of Supervisors** announced Jessica Guzman as the 2021 Tulare County Employee of the Year. Guzman, an accountant II with Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency, was described as an individual who goes above and beyond in all her assigned duties.

Valley Children's Healthcare celebrated with NFL quarterback and Valley Children's Ambassador Derek Carr for the opening of their newly renovated playground.



VALLEY CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE

May, **CSET** hosted its Annual Community Action Event to celebrate CSET's role in the community and recognize Employee of the Year and partners. 13 CSET employees were honored.

1852 fall league divisions for **Soccer City 1852 Visalia** opened in June.

Eagle Mountain Casino recognized 18 team members with the prestigious Eagle Award in June. The Eagle Award has significant symbolism as it recognizes team members who exemplify the core values of what makes the culture of the casino. E.A.G.L.E. stands for Extraordinary, Achievement, Greatness, Leadership, Excellence. Congratulations!

In June, Officers with the **Visalia Police Department** participated in the Law Enforcement Torch Run for the 2022 Special Olympics.



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Tri Counties Bank and FHLBank San Francisco Donate \$200K to Black Homeownership for National Homeownership Month

Tri Counties Bank announced today, in conjunction with the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco (FHLBank San Francisco), a \$200,000 donation to promote Black homeownership as part of the FHLBank San Francisco's Empowering Black Homeownership matching grant program.

The recently launched program is a key component of Tri Counties Bank and FHLBank San Francisco's commitment to advancing racial equity in homeownership and narrowing the Black homeownership and wealth gaps. Through this new program, FHLBank San Francisco's member financial institutions can request dollar-for-dollar matching grants, up to a total matching amount of \$125,000, for their donations to approved housing counseling agencies.

"We are fortunate to have FHLBank San Francisco as a partner in our efforts to increase Black homeownership across our footprint," said Rick Smith, President & CEO of Tri Counties Bank. "There is no better time to kick off this program than in June, both for National Homeownership Month and in appreciation of Juneteenth."

FHLBank San Francisco matched Tri Counties Bank's \$100,000 donation for a total of \$200,000, which will be distributed in \$50,000 grants to four Housing Counseling Agencies (HCAs) throughout Tri Counties Bank's footprint: Greater Sacramento Urban League, Self Help Enterprises, Community Housing Development Corporation, and San Francisco Housing Development Corporation.

"Pre- and post-homeownership counseling can be the key to sustainable homeownership, and we are thrilled that Tri Counties Bank is using our new Empowering Black Homeownership program to support four different HCAs," said Marietta Núñez, Senior Vice President and Community Investment Officer at FHLBank San Francisco. "The Bank's match of Tri Counties Bank's donations to these HCAs will magnify their impact and enable the agencies to serve more aspiring and at-risk homeowners in communities where Tri Counties Bank does business."

Self-Help Enterprises (SHE), located in Visalia, California, was founded in 1965 with the mission to work together with low-income families to build and sustain healthy homes and communities. SHE serves eight counties in the San Joaquin Valley: Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Stanislaus and Tulare County. Although this area is known as a top agricultural production region, the San Joaquin Valley has among the highest poverty rates in the State of California.

The organization will use the grant to link opportunities to enhance and create outreach campaigns in Black communities to promote the Mutual Self-Help Housing Program. Participants will be served with customized homeownership resources, educational, and home counseling needs. SHE will implement alliances and collaboration strategies with partners to pursue shared goals to raise and strengthen Black homeownership.

"We are grateful for Tri Counties Bank's Black Homeownership Grant as it will enable us to continue to provide access-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Self-Help Enterprises team poses in front of their facility in Visalia.

ble housing opportunities for the underserved members of our community," said Tom Collishaw, President and CEO of SHE. "This grant will help cre-

ate a direct path toward sustainable homeownership for the Valley's Black families and will empower them to build wealth for generations to come."

RIBBON CUTTING



Tri Counties Bank hosted a ribbon cutting in celebration of their one year-anniversary at their Downtown Visalia branch. The downtown branch is located at 618 W. Main Street.

How can I apply for the Leadership Visalia program?

Applications are open for the 2022-23 Leadership Visalia cohort! Visit visaliachamber.org/leadership to download the application. Applications are due August 1st!

How can I schedule a ribbon cutting?

We love to celebrate member accomplishments! Visit visaliachamber.org/ribbon-cutting to learn how our ribbon cutting events typically work. Contact me directly to schedule.

Have a question about the Chamber?

Send me a message: Jena@visaliachamber.org

QK, a short name for a company with such a long, rich history

For half a century QK, formerly Quad Knopf, has provided professional services to communities throughout the Central Valley, and beyond. This year, we are excited to celebrate our 50th anniversary! In October, we will close Burke Street, just outside of our Visalia office for our annual Blocktoberfest where there will be great food, drinks, and a live band. We look forward to celebrating and honoring those who have inspired our ingenuity throughout the years - our valued clients, pioneering team members, and esteemed community partners.

Today over 135 talented professionals provide consulting services in civil engineering, land surveying, planning, environmental, landscape architecture, construction management and other supporting services. Some of these QKers, as we are fondly referred to, have ded-



icated 40+ years to building the history of this legacy company. Fifty years of changes in economy, technology, or society in general can only be weathered with strong, agile leadership and loyal key stakeholders. Since 2018, President and CEO Ron Wathen, a civil engineer, and Central Valley native has led the company. Before taking on this role and while currently leading QK, Ron has held several leadership roles within the community, in business and philanthropic organizations, just as his predecessors had. Commitment to community is woven into the fabric of QK's purpose and culture, as seen in the history of what built QK, or

QUAD Consultants as it was in the beginning.

QUAD Consultants was established in 1972 in the City of Visalia, California by former City Manager Harry Tow and former Community Development Director Randy Zeeb. Harry, a civil engineer, and certified planner invested 48 years to our clients and QKers. In fact, he handwrote his final memo and remained a beloved mentor even in his final week. Harry established an extraordinary record of service to our Central Valley community as a city official, business owner, and community leader. His mark on QK was just as significant as his mark on the community because he cared for and was wholeheartedly dedicated to both.

In 1998, QUAD merged with Knopf Engineering (est. 1976)

See QK on page 6



PHOTO BY RIGOBERTO MORAN

Momentum Broadcasting will be hosting a summer speaker series focused on business at their Visalia location.

Business, marketing experts to speak in Visalia

Momentum Broadcasting's summer speaker series will feature speakers like Bob Hoffman and Jeffrey Allen "Skunk" Baxter



By Sam Moore
Reporter
The Sun-Gazette

Momentum Broadcasting, home to radio station favorites like MY97.5 and Classic Rock 99.7, is hosting a summer speaker series featuring experts in marketing, sales and advertising.

The series will be held in four installments from June through September at Momentum Broadcasting's headquarters in Visalia. Bill Lynch, Momentum's general manager, said he hopes the series will draw in local business owners or anyone interested in learning more about what it takes to run a business.

"People are going to walk out of these hour long keynote speeches and their heads are going to just be rocked," Lynch said.

The first speaker in the series, Bob Hoffman, is one of the most sought-after speakers on advertising and marketing in the world.

"He's the boy who says that the king is wearing no clothes. That's Bob Hoffman," Lynch said. "He's great to hear and go see because he's really engaging. He's funny, and he knows how to make his point."

Hoffman has written five books about advertising, each an Amazon No. 1 bestseller. He also runs the blog The Ad Contrarian, which was named one of the world's most influential marketing and advertising blogs by Business Insider. He will be speaking as part of the series on

June 9.

The second speaker in the series is Jeff Schmidt, senior vice president of professional development at the Radio Advertising Bureau. Schmidt's expertise is in building a durable brand identity to grow a business. He is speaking on July 7.

Jeffrey Allen "Skunk" Baxter, best known for being a guitarist and founding member of Steely Dan and the lead guitarist of The Doobie Brothers, is the third speaker of the series. Baxter currently works with The U.S. Department of Defense as a defense consultant, chairing a Congressional Advisory Board on missile defense, and at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. He is also a nationally and internationally renowned public speaker on the topics of innovation and asymmetrical thinking in business, which is what his focus will be at the summer speaker series on Aug. 11.

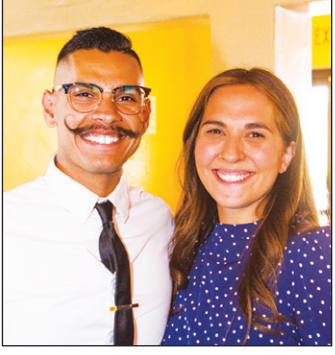
The final installment of the series is a panel discussion called "Doing Well Doing Good." Panelists include MJ DePalma of Microsoft's Garage as director of inclusive marketing, Angela Northrup, area executive director for St. Jude Research Hospital, and Renee Richardson, director of philanthropy, Metallica's "All Within My Hands" Foundation. Their discussion will include topics like the reasons to get involved in Charitable Giving, Marketing with Purpose, Inclusive Marketing, what to be thinking about when getting involved in Cause Marketing, pitfalls, opportunities and more. The discussion will take place on Sept. 15.

The series will take place at 700 E. Mineral King Avenue in Visalia. Tickets can be purchased at 997classicrock.com/sections/landing-pages/amplify-speakers.

VISALIA CHAMBER AWARDS 2022

Congratulations!

PHOTOS BY BECCA AND HER CAMERA PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN



MAN & WOMAN OF THE YEAR
BOB LINK
JODY GILMAN



LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
AMERICAN AMBULANCE OF VISALIA



MEDIUM BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
ELITE MEDICAL



SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
ASHOORI & CO. JEWELERS



NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR
ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF VISALIA





Leadership Visalia: More than a leadership program



Jason Denis
Business Development Manager,
Tri Counties Bank

Leadership Visalia is a leadership program that is offered through our Visalia Chamber of Commerce. This program is meant to aid in the development of leadership skills, offer networking opportunities with local community leaders and learning about Visalia. That in itself makes this program worthwhile, but what I discovered is that it offers all that and so much more.

I had the honor of being a part of the Leadership Visalia Class of 2021-2022. Being new to this community I initially joined as a way to get to know more people, get to know Visalia and develop myself more as a leader in my new role. As I went through the program, I got to know so much about Visalia, meet local community leaders that would take me years to meet otherwise, and learn about how leadership/leadership skills can be utilized in a variety of careers and scenarios. Besides learning about leadership and Visalia, for myself it was a pleasure to work on our community project and getting to know my fellow leaders and mentors in this year's class. Our facilitator for the program, Raquel Garcia, did an amazing and influential job organizing and leading this course, providing us with knowledge, wisdom, and support as we took on this program on top of our other responsibilities

we had. The class itself consisted of 13 leaders from diverse industries all throughout Visalia that joined the program this year. Each one of them bringing something special to our program. As the year went on, we got to know each other on a professional and personal level, creating relationships that will go beyond the time in this program. Together we were able to accomplish many tasks and overcome obstacles including creating and funding a mobile clothing closet that will be benefitting our local College of the Sequoias campuses, providing them with free professional clothing for interviews, jobs and more. Something that we can be proud of and see grow for years to come.

There are a variety of reasons to join this wonderful program. This program is well known throughout the community. When you mention that you are or were in Leadership you connect with fellow Alumni and have that prestige of being part of this well respected program. You also learn so much about your community that many people here have never known about which makes you a more informed citizen. But if I were to have to summarize as to why join Leadership Visalia I would say it's an opportunity for networking, gaining mentors, having support, making an impact in your community, learning about your community, connecting with your community, learning about leadership, developing your skills, visiting various industries throughout Visalia, connecting with community leaders, discovering yourself as a leader, and so much more. But one of the most important reasons to me are the relationships that you will develop in this program. I highly recommend Leadership Visalia and I encourage anyone that is considering this program to sign up.

Leadership Visalia Program: Why dive into the unknown?



Karishma Fazalbhoy
Administrative Specialist II,
Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency

Have you ever experienced a detour in your life's journey which starts out as "why did this happen to me?", but ends up as "I am so glad this occurred". There are often those mysterious detours in life that maybe unplanned at first, but eventually leads us to the correction destination. Such is the story of my leadership journey through this premier leadership academy in town, our very own "Leadership Visalia" program offered through the Visalia Chamber of Commerce.

Leadership Visalia program is comprised with an assorted curriculum: participant facilitated day sessions, instructor facilitated afternoon sessions, mentor meetings, participant-initiated craft talks, and a community project. When my life's journey paused at this junction, there were a lot of unknowns and a lot of what-if questions. Most of all, it was diving into the unknown, but knowing that there was a higher purpose to serve through this detour. So, the questions you can ask yourself are these: "Are you looking to serve a higher purpose at work OR in the community?", "Are you looking for a career change and would like to learn about different industries that serve locally?", "Have you thought about growing your public speaking

skills?", "How about expanding your networking skills to align with your goals OR simply gaining that strong peer support in the community to empower each other as leaders?". If you answered YES to any one of these questions, look no further, join Leadership Visalia!

This (9) month professional development program is focused to promote "out of the box" thinking. If you have ever wondered what it feels like to dive into topics outside of your areas of expertise and simultaneously sharpen your leadership skills, JOIN the program! The connections made with local community leaders and mentors exposes the participants to think about different issues in the community and make recommendations around several key topics (including, but not limited to):

- Public Safety & Justice
- Planning & Land Use
- Agriculture & Water
- Community & Social Services
- Economic development
- Education
- Quality of life

After completion of this program, I have experienced a personal transformation to increase service in the community and help in making a difference. Every bit counts and every hand in the mix is valuable, for together we can work towards making our community a better place for co-existence and support (#LoyaltoLocal).

HEALTH CARE

Kaweah Health seeks community advisory council members

Kaweah Health is accepting applications for its advisory councils designed to generate ideas about how to better serve community health needs. Members of the public are invited to apply.

Councils, established in 2017, work to identify opportunities to enhance local partnerships and community relations, to provide ideas about future community health needs and to plan for future buildings and facilities. Each council reflects the diverse demographics of the region and is comprised of up to 20 council members.

Individuals over the age of 18



are encouraged to apply. Applicants must be committed to building a partnership with Kaweah Health to better serve the community at large. Previous leadership experience is not required. Selected members will be required to attend monthly council meetings. Individuals interested in being considered can get more information and complete an application form at <https://www.kaweahhealth.org/about-us/community-engagement> or by calling (559) 624-2382.



Want a voice in your health care?

Kaweah Health is listening.

Join an advisory council or ambassador group.

Meet monthly with hospital leaders to share insights and feedback on Kaweah Health's future facilities, proposed services, and initiatives. Our goal is to create healthcare that works for you.

For more information, please contact:

Deborah Volosin,
Director of Community Engagement
(559) 624-2529

Or just fill out an online application:
<https://www.KaweahHealth.org/about-us/community-engagement/>



For a shortcut to the form, just scan the QR code with your smart phone camera.



HEALTH CARE

Ten Central Valley food banks, charities and neighborhood groups combat food insecurity thanks to \$350,000 in grants from Health Net

With inflation making food more costly, food banks and community organizations need help feeding families that struggle to put food on the table



Health Net has awarded more than \$350,000 to community-based organizations (CBOs) in California's Central Valley that are dedicated to improving food access and health equity. The grants are part of Health Net's ongoing commitment to improve community health by addressing chronic food insecurity.

A community suffers from food insecurity when there's either not enough food, or when local diets generally lack quality, variety, or desirability. Research has shown that food insecurity is linked to many adverse effects for overall health. 1

"Hunger and health are deeply connected," said Martha Santana Chin, Medi-Cal President of Health Net. "People who are food insecure are disproportionately affected by diet-sensitive diseases such as asthma, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and high blood pressure. We invest in access to nutritious food because it improves the health of individuals and boosts the long-term wellness of communities."

The Central Valley contains more than 1.4 million acres of productive pasture and farmland. Yet, according to the Central California Food Bank in Fresno, hunger levels were 25% higher in Fresno in 2021 than in 2019. In addition, California produces nearly half of the nation's fruits and vegetables, yet 1 in 5 Californians do not know where their next meal will come from.

With more than 85 percent of their members enrolled in a government sponsored plan, Health Net has launched innovative programs which leverage local partnerships to combat food insecurity. This includes:

- Food Pharmacies, which support community organizations, offering nutrition classes, cooking demonstrations and direct access to healthy foods.
- Medically Tailored Meals, which reach vulnerable members and improve nutrition.
- Food Rx Programs, which reduce in-patient readmission and drive long-term cost savings.

To help reduce health disparities in the Central Valley, Health Net awarded 10 grants to CBOs. Among them, Salt + Light Works received \$100,000 to support their innovative project, The Neighborhood Village (TNV). Breaking ground in 2022, TNV will be a supportive housing village for people in Tulare County who have experienced chronic homelessness. TNV will include a state-of-the-art community kitchen, which will provide meals for residents, a Farm-to-Table Culinary Training Program, and more.

Other grantees who received funding to expand their initiatives to combat food insecurity include:

- Central California Food Bank, which provides food to over 220 partner feeding sites including churches, community centers, and other organizations so they can feed the hungry in their respective neighborhoods.
- CityServe Bakersfield, which purchases and transports food into some of the hardest to reach neighborhoods across Kern County.
- CityServe Tulare/Kings, which provides lunches for children at school.

- Emergency Food Bank Stockton/San Joaquin, which provides fresh produce to community centers, senior centers, and schools, as well as community cooking demonstrations.
- Foodlink for Tulare County, which promotes equitable and dignified access to nutritious, healthy food while also addressing the root cause of hunger through education, advocacy and food systems change.
- Nourish California, which aims to remove barriers for Californians accessing programs like CalFresh by simplifying the application process for seniors and working with community partners to collect and organize stories in support of the Food4All Campaign to remove the immigrant exclusion policy.
- Second Harvest of the Greater Valley, which serves families, seniors, and individuals struggling with food security in Stanislaus County through their Mobile Fresh program.
- The Salvation Army, Modesto Corps, which supports medically tailored diabetic food programs within shelters through buying fresh produce, nutritionist supported meal planning for guests, and community outreach.
- United Samaritans Foundation, which serves approximately 1,500 lunches a day throughout Stanislaus County in 11 communities at 57 stops.

With decades of experience providing care for the state, Health Net continues to lead the charge to improve health equity with multi-faceted, collaborative and culturally relevant programs and interventions at the statewide and local level. To learn more about Health Net's industry-leading efforts to drive health equity, visit BridgingtheDivideCA.com and follow Health Net on Facebook and Twitter.

SHRUM

Continued from page 2

to discuss the District's future. The second strategy outlined in the plan is examining District's systems. The work in this area will be driven by the feedback received through the superintendent search survey taken by students, staff, parents, and the community. Those areas are academics, safety, and communication. The last part of the plan includes envisioning a path forward and creating conditions that will ensure every student in the District is successful. After examining areas within the District that need more attention, the district administration will create a strategy that clearly outlines priorities and goals focusing on academics, safety, and communication.

In addition to putting a robust entry plan into motion, Superintendent Shrum will launch the One Visalia Connected initiative. One Visalia Connected aims to connect every VUSD student to meaningful activities within or outside the school environment.

The idea is to engage students in activities on or off campus, such as student-run clubs, sports, the arts, service projects, or internships. Better student engagement improves student learning. Educational research has indicated strong correlations between student engagement and student achievement. These correlations apply to all grade levels of instruction. The One Visalia Connected initiative provides a great opportunity to expand our partnerships with our community.

Mr. Shrum acknowledged during the Board meeting that there is much to be proud of in VUSD, but there is also much work to do. During the 2022-2023 school year, VUSD administrators, teachers, and staff will work together to create a safe, welcoming environment where students have the opportunity to learn at high levels. The Superintendent's Entry Plan lays the foundation for a successful launch of the 2022-2023 school year.

If you would like to view the Superintendent's Entry Plan online, please visit www.vusd.org/domain/4314.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

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:



COS Ag Irrigation Academy applications

College of the Sequoias opens applications for its second Ag Irrigation Academy with internship to high school and college students and anyone else interested



STAFF REPORT

The College of the Sequoias (COS) is now accepting applications for its semester-long Ag Irrigation Academy which includes an internship. Applications are open to high school and college students, anyone already in the field as well as anyone who may be interested.

The 18 week Ag Irrigation Academy began last year with 16 students. The class is a combination of classroom learning and in the field work experience, providing students with around 500 hours of experience. There are no prerequisites required for the academy.

"There is tremendous opportunity in this field and the Ag Irrigation Academy gives students very valuable skills," Steve Huth, president of TechnoFlo Systems said. "These jobs

are not going to go away, especially with the increasing local and state requirements to collect and track data on water flow and evaporation."

TechnoFlo Systems manufactures, tests and repairs flow measurement products. He said that like many other agricultural employers, he struggles to find quality employees who are trained to work in the specialized field of agricultural irrigation. Huth is an advocate for the COS Irrigation Academy because by providing this opportunity, they are performing a service to the industry itself, "These interns are potential employees for us, our customers and business partners."

Gloria Ramirez, was working part-time in irrigation at Vincent Sola farms when she enrolled in the academy. "Being in the Ag Irrigation Academy deepened my understanding of the whole process to increase yield and effectively use water," Ramirez said. "I love my work

We can take what we are learning to grow healthier crops and help feed the world."

According to Charlie Abee, an instructor in the academy, farms and ranches are adapting to drought conditions and higher water costs by installing more automated equipment and keeping a closer eye on the irrigation systems. "The Irrigation Academy is aligned with employers to teach the needed skills so graduates can earn \$18-25/hr. to start and \$26-35/hr. with experience," Abee said.

Huth hired an individual who went through the academy and says there is a great deal of value in going through the academy for both employer and employee. "After the internship, we brought on an academy graduate as an employee," Huth said. "You can 'test drive' prospective employees as well as expose them to your company culture and products. This is absolutely part of our recruiting strategy."

A student who recently com-

pleted the academy, Tim Braziel, said the coursework was expertly aligned with the internship. "Mr. Abee exposed us to all aspects of irrigation to prepare us for a variety of jobs, from designing systems on the computer to the hands-on work of maintaining them, it was covered," Braziel said. "Whether you like working outdoors among the trees, troubleshooting equipment or reviewing data in the office to develop a strategy, there are opportunities in Ag Irrigation."

Prospective students can go to the Ag Irrigation Academy web page cos.edu/AgIrrigation and contact Chelsea for individualized assistance with enrollment at chelseac@cos.edu or 559-688-3044.

Employers interested in offering internships can contact Cosmo Costales, CTE Career Services at cosmoc@cos.edu or 559-688-3122.

New housing development in Visalia set to begin construction

Brand new community Maplewood will consist of 138 houses built by San Joaquin Valley Homes



STAFF REPORT

Maplewood homes will range in size from 1,298 to 2,076 square feet on minimum 5,000 square foot lots. One- and two-story modern cottage, craftsman and farmhouse style exteriors will be situated throughout traffic-friendly cul-de-sacs that include spacious corners and some oversized

lots. Homes will have three to four bedrooms and two to 2.5 bathrooms with attached two-car garages.

The community will be located in the Visalia Unified School District where students will attend Mineral King Elementary School, Valley Oak Intermediate School and Golden West High School.

"We love to build homes in Visalia," said Lana Fahoum, sales manager at SJV Homes. "Many of our staff live and work

here, so we're excited to share this wonderful community with new homeowners from families just starting out to retiring couples who wish to downsize."

According to the National Association of Home Builders' formula to determine the local impact of single-family housing in typical metro areas, adding 138 single-family homes will generate \$39 million in local income, \$5 million in taxes and other revenue for local governments and 543 local jobs.

STAYCATION

Continued from page 1

site, and be sure to check local event calendars for First Friday, the free downtown monthly art hop, free family friendly events like Movies in the Park at Riverway Sports Park or see what type of music or live entertainment is on tap at the Fox Theater or live venues across the city.

There are hundreds of options to explore, at just about every price point, and adventures can be tailored to fit just what you're looking for. To get started, visit visitvisalia.com and sign-up for their newsletter for the latest details delivered right to your inbox. Or, if you're downtown, Visitor Center hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 112 E. Main St.

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

LAW

Continued from page 2

are fairly straightforward, employers can save themselves problems down the road by making sure expenses are handled properly.

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 (www.thecalifornialawyers.com).

QK

Continued from page 3

bringing the added leadership of Michael D. Knopf who was a known trailblazer and visionary within the community. Mike led the company through peaks and valleys, including the Great Recession. Mike and his team's combination of grit and bold resourcefulness allowed for the company to weather storms and come out on the other side stronger and more agile setting the foundation for a long-lasting resilient company. As Chairman of the Board, Mike continues to provide leadership and share the wisdom he has gained through the past 24 years as a QKer and over 40 years as a civil engineer, land surveyor, and business owner.

Once the storms were weathered and lessons were learned QK returned to focusing on growth. Leadership planned for steady, strong, strategic expansion beyond QK's Bakersfield, Visalia, and then Fresno, now Clovis locations. This growth started with the addition of Fremming, Parson & Pecchenino (FP&P) in 2013 strengthening our geographic influence in Merced and our water expertise across the company. In 2016, the company rebranded to become QK as Mike scaled back to prepare for retirement. Shortly after the rebrand, we welcomed our Porterville office, formerly James Winton & Associates to the QK family. Just last year we were fortunate enough to add our Hanford Team through an acquisition of Zumwalt, Hansen & Associates (ZHA).

For more information about QK please visit our website at www.qkinc.com.



July 21, 2022
11:30am-1:30pm

Bello Vita Venue
4211 W Goshen Ave

visaliachamber.org



APPLICATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 1, 2022

Want to learn more?

visaliachamber.org/leadership

1 & 2 HOUR TRAINING OPTIONS

HARASSMENT SEMINAR

JULY 27TH | 8AM-10AM
LAMP LITER INN

State mandated Supervisors' Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Seminar & Workshop

REGISTER: visaliachamber.org/workshops-seminars

Presented by

