

# www.visaliachamber.org Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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### Leadership Visalia: Land Use and Planning Day Session

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### City of Visalia: Greetings of the Season

The chill in the air means winter is here and that the holiday season is underway. For those with visions of sugar plums dancing in their head, now is the time to check out the just released Visalia Parks & Recreation Winter Live & Play Activity Guide. **4**

## EVENTS

### FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR DATES

#### Coffee & Conversation with Your Chamber CEO-Facebook Live

Time: 8 a.m.

## TRAVEL WITH US

### MARCH 17-23, 2024

New Orleans and Cajun Country

### APRIL 24-MAY 1, 2024

Nashville, Smoky Mountains and Bluegrass

### MAY 24-JUNE 2, 2024

Memorials of World War II

### JUNE 20-27, 2024

Alaska: Call of the Wild

### JULY 17-25, 2024

Great Canadian Cities

### SEPTEMBER 20-26, 2024

New York City and the Hudson River Valley

### OCTOBER 1-9, 2024

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

## Hilton's newest hotel opens in Visalia

New hospitality venue to provide visitors and residents a place to relax and enjoy the amenities of the city



PHOTO COURTESY OF KLASSEN CORPORATION

On Oct. 20, the Hilton Garden Inn, a 4-story hotel located just minutes from the World Ag Expo Center and Sequoia National Forest, opened its doors for guests.

## The Sun-Gazette

After several years in the works, Hilton Hotels opened a new location in Visalia that will not only be able to serve those visiting the city, but its residents as well. Located just off Highway 198 and parallel to the Valley Oaks Golf Course, it will have quick access downtown Visalia, the convention center and the city's outlet mall. "It's a wonderful new property," said Julee Sharp, the hotel's director of sales. "It will (provide) another place for residents to eat and dine, and our large ballroom will be (good) for holding meetings."

On Oct. 20, the Hilton Garden Inn, a 4-story hotel located just minutes from the World Ag Expo Center and Sequoia Na-

tional Forest, opened its doors for guests. In addition to its 112 rooms, there is also a restaurant and lounge, a patio with a fire pit and a pool, as well as event spaces with full banquet services.

According to Sharp, the new hotel is "not only for the Corporate traveler (but also) a great place to stay for families visiting the Sequoias and our beautiful Central Valley California town." She continued by noting the city's beauty and the many offerings of its downtown.

"It's right in the middle of California, so it's a nice stopping place," she said. "Visalia offers a lot of things downtown (such as) restaurants, breweries, fine dining and tea."

In their press release, Hector Ramos, the hotel's general manager, shared how thrilled the company is to "bring Hil-

ton Garden Inn's inviting atmosphere and best-in-class service to Visalia."

The Hilton Garden Inn is part of Hilton Honors, the award-winning guest-loyalty program for Hilton's 18 distinct hotel brands. Hilton Honors members who book directly through preferred Hilton channels have access to instant benefits, which includes a flexible payment slider, and an exclusive member discount, as well as free wifi.

Members also enjoy popular digital tools available exclusively through the industry-leading Hilton Honors mobile app, where Hilton Honors members can check in, choose their room and access their room using a digital key. For more information or to make reservations, visit Hilton Garden Inn Visalia or call 559-608-6400.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### The Power of "Girlcott"

Supporting businesses that share our values



Gail Zurek  
 President and CEO  
 Visalia Chamber

In a world where our purchasing decisions hold immense influence, a growing movement is dedicated to celebrating the positive and empowering aspects of spending. Enter the "Girlcott," a concept that shifts the focus from boycotting to supporting. At its core, a Girlcott is about directing your hard-earned money towards businesses that share your values, contribute to our community, and make a positive impact on the causes and issues close to your heart.

#### Shifting the Narrative: Boycott vs. Girlcott

We're all familiar with the idea of a boycott – refusing to support businesses or organizations that don't align with our beliefs. While boycotts have their place in driving change, they often carry a negative connotation. A Girlcott, on the other hand, adopts a more positive and proactive approach. Instead of punishing the "bad actors," it champions and promotes the "good ones."

Essentially, a Girlcott encourages us to actively seek out businesses that align with our values, invest in our communities, and promote positive change. By directing our spending towards these businesses, we send a powerful message – we support what they stand for and want to see them thrive.

#### Empowering Through Economic Choices

Your hard-earned money is a potent tool for change. When you choose to spend it with businesses that resonate with your values, you're not merely making a purchase – you're casting a vote for the kind of world you wish to see. Here's how your economic choices can be incredibly empowering:

**1. Amplifying Your Voice:** Every dollar spent is a vote for the businesses you endorse. Beyond your patronage, take the opportunity to express your support by praising them on social media, encouraging others to join in supporting them, and spreading the word about the

exceptional quality of their services or products.

- 2. Shape Your Ideal Visalia:** Local businesses form the backbone of our community, offering employment to our neighbors, supporting local initiatives, and contributing to the unique character of our cherished community. Supporting them actively contributes to job creation, economic vitality, and the preservation of your neighborhood's distinctive charm.
- 3. Securing Our Tomorrow:** Girlcoting isn't just about today; it's a powerful investment in our shared future. By directing your consumer choices towards businesses that prioritize your values, you're not only rewarding those who do it right but also ensuring that Visalia continues its journey forward, hand in hand. With each conscious decision, you propel our community toward a brighter and more united tomorrow.

#### How to Start Girlcoting

Here are practical steps to kickstart your Girlcott journey:

- Begin with small steps by selecting one or two businesses that align with your values and make them your preferred choices for those products or services. Share your experiences with friends, family, and your social networks. Let them know about the businesses you admire and why you support them. Your positive influence can be infectious.
- Recognize that the business landscape is ever-changing, and companies can evolve their practices and values. Stay open to re-evaluating your choices as businesses progress and be willing to adjust your support accordingly.

In a world where negativity often takes the spotlight, the Girlcott movement breathes fresh air. It reminds us that our spending power can be a force for good and a catalyst for change. By consciously choosing to support businesses aligned with our values, we can create a ripple effect that inspires others to do the same.

So, let's embrace the Girlcott revolution. Let's celebrate the businesses making a positive impact, and let's use our wallets to show that we believe in their mission. Together, we can build a better Visalia, one purchase at a time.

## tri counties bank

Service With Solutions®

### Bank kicks off annual food drive

Tri Counties Bank announced today the launch of its 17th Annual Tis the Season Food Drive, in partnership with The Salvation Army. The food drive aims to collect over 50,000 pounds of non-perishable food items from November 13 – December 22 to help families in need throughout California.

The food drive is an opportunity for the general public, local merchants, schools, and other organizations in the community to meet the overwhelming need for food. All donations stay local and assist The Salvation Army with refilling their pantries after the holiday season, so they can continue to feed families throughout the year.

"This food drive and our partnership with The Salvation Army allows us to provide assistance in areas where the most help is needed and continue to make a positive difference in the lives of our community members," said Scott Robertson, Senior Vice President and Chief Community Banking Officer for Tri Counties Bank. "We are humbled to be able to support those in need, especially during the holiday season."

Non-perishable or canned food donations can be dropped off at any Tri Counties Bank branch. Monetary donations can be made online at [TriCountiesBank.com/TisTheSeason](http://TriCountiesBank.com/TisTheSeason) and every dollar donated equates to a pound of food towards the Bank's goal of 50,000 pounds.

Tri Counties Bank strongly

encourages donations of the top non-perishable items requested by The Salvation Army:

- Peanut Butter
- Canned Tuna/Chicken
- Canned Beans/Veggies
- Rice & Whole Grain Pasta
- Soups
- Oatmeal/Cereal
- Canola/Olive Oil
- Coffee/Tea

"The Salvation Army is incredibly thankful for community partners like Tri Counties Bank," said Major John Brackenbury, Divisional Commander of The Salvation Army Del Oro Division. "The support we receive from community partners means thousands of people will not have to decide between going to the grocery store or keeping the lights on. We stand with partners like Tri Counties Bank to help those suffering or in need to have a brighter future."

Visit [TriCountiesBank.com/TisTheSeason](http://TriCountiesBank.com/TisTheSeason) to learn more.

Established in 1975, Tri Counties Bank is a wholly-owned subsidiary of TriCo Bancshares (NASDAQ: TCBK) headquartered in Chico, California, with assets of almost \$10 billion and nearly 50 years of financial stability. Tri Counties Bank provides a unique brand of Service With Solutions® for communities throughout California with a breadth of personal, small business and commercial banking services, plus an extensive branch network, access to approximately 40,000 sur-

See BANK on page 6



DRAZEN / ADOBE STOCK

Ask Jena



Does the Chamber have a list of local businesses or non-profits to support during the holiday season?

Thank you for being #LoyaltoLocal! You can find our searchable directory at [visaliachamber.org](http://visaliachamber.org).

What does the Chamber have planned for 2024?

We have some exciting announcements for 2024! Make sure to follow our Facebook (@VisaliaChamberofCommerce) and Instagram (@visaliachamber) pages for the latest news and announcements.

Have a question about the Chamber?

Send me a message:  
[Jena@visaliachamber.org](mailto:Jena@visaliachamber.org)





# Land Use and Planning Day Session



**Melissa Lopez**  
Revel Venues

On Friday, November 3, the Leadership Visalia Group was hosted at Sequoia Regional Cancer Center by Facilitators David Bly and Victoria Balderas. We were welcomed by yummy breakfast snack and a lot of coffee to keep us energized through our day. We started with an ice breaker, "If you were a Starbucks drink, What would you be?" A lot of us are Chai Tea Latte people, which I thought was pretty interesting. The group had the opportunity to hear from Steve Brandt of QK. Previously, he worked for the City of Visalia for 6 years and have over seen several projects. He took our group on a journey through storytelling, from Visalia's establishment in 1852 to some of the current planning decisions. Visalia was the only town between Stockton and Los Angeles at the time. When the railroad in 1870s decided to move south to the valley, everyone assumed it would connect to Visalia, however the railroad was asking for a huge sum of money that Visalia at the time, for reasons unknown for sure did not pay the requested fee. The railroad changed their plans and created Goshen to compete with Visalia. Visalia was the only town that was not on the railroad line at the time, however the town built their own railroad that connected to Goshen that still runs on Goshen Ave through downtown Visalia today. In 1922 The Boy Scouts planted several Oak trees on 198 from downtown to the 99, some of those trees are still located in the medians between 198 and 99.

Visalia's main goal has always been to have a very strong downtown community. As the city started to grow, Mooney Blvd was a main highway leading to Tulare, during that time the county was starting to develop, and the City of Visalia had to become more aggressive to annex more land. During this time both Visalia and Tulare were competing, and in 1950 the city of Tulare was bigger than Visalia which lead to the decision to build quicker than Tulare. During the 1960s - 70s, the city manager, Harry Tao started to Industrial Park, Plaza Park specifically, it has taken 60 years to get it to what we see currently. These plans take a lot of forecasting for the future. In the 1960s the state required all cities to start building with a General Plan. Visalia's core, Downtown, has always been the focus. Today the general plan still holds true, as our city grows with tiers. The best way to describe it is simple, once all empty space is filled in the tier then the next phase is open for development.

After storytelling with Mr. Brandt, we jumped in on our first activity for the day. We built our own city, and boy was this challenging. We needed to build a city based on 100,000 residents with all the necessary amenities. We had to think of location for a police department, fire department, schools, water treatment and government buildings. This was really an eye-opening task. Our lunch was proved by The Pickled Deli, which is highly recommended. As we moved in to our second half of the day, we took a little field trip to The Lofts at Fort Visalia. This project is headed by Self-Help Enterprises. We had the pleasure of touring the space with representatives Christine Ainley of Self-Help and Salvatore, a supervisor from BJ Perch Construction Inc. Before construction on this project started, raising the property out of flood zone was necessary. This property is a multi-family project, 80 units total with 50% of these units allocated to unhoused individuals. Some of the units will be fully furnished by Self-Help. This location is believed to be the location of the first settlers of Visalia. The facility will have a computer lab, community kitchen, conference room along with so much more for the residents.

After returning from our tour, we had the privilege of continuing our discuss around city planning with Adam Peck of the Planning Commission and Brandon Smith of the City's Community Development Department. They discussed the protocol on getting items approved through the City. Zoning and use are major factors in approving a project. Most times companies will not come forth and

See LEADERSHIP on page 4

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



**Name:** Dustin Della  
**Company:** Mission Bank  
**Title:** Regional President

Mission Bank is a California based business bank with locations in Bakersfield, Lancaster, San Luis Obispo, Shafter,

Stockton, Ventura, and Visalia. Our primary focus is to help fuel and grow vibrant communities and that means supporting local business owners with commercial lending, treasury management, business services, and more.

We pride ourselves on the relationships we have with our clients. When you bank with Mission you come with a designated team that is there to assist you with all your needs. No waiting on hold with customer service, you are on a first name basis with your points of contact. We look at our services as somewhat boutique and our customers benefit from truly personalized service.

So far in 2023 Mission Bank has invested thousands of dollars back into Visalia and the surrounding communities, whether it's supporting Rotary, various business organizations, CASA of Tulare County, or faith-based groups, it's important to help support the good works of community leaders if we truly want to live our mission and achieve our vision.

The best part of working for your company is the Relationships that we get to build with our customers that live and work in the same community as we do.

The Chamber was an invaluable asset as we were planning our Grand Opening in May. Once we set our date and were connected with Jena, the Chamber remained in constant contact with our planning committee to offer assistance and give us advice on launching a successful opening. Since then, we hear from them often to make sure we're aware of local activities and invite us to volunteer with community events.

The potential for success multiplies when you find the right banking relationship. It's not just about transactions, it's about building a trusted partnership where the banker serves as an advisor and friend, that's where you find growth and success. We offer that kind of service at Mission Bank and would love to show more local business what it's like to have our team on their side, working with them to reach their goals and full potential.

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

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**Editor** ..... Gail Zurek  
**Layout** ..... The Sun-Gazette

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## 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

## 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.

#### Small Business Members:

- Apicot Lane Boutique
- Central Valley Carts
- Chuck E. Cheese
- Ed-Link, Inc.
- Les Schwab Tire Center
- Tractor Supply Co.
- Visalia Feral Cat Coalition (this new membership was made possible by the support of Tucoemas Federal Credit Union)

#### Business Connector Members:

- JEM Restaurant Management (Wendy's)

### RENEWING

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

#### Keystone Members:

- Family HealthCare Network

#### Business Connector Members:

- Just Between Friends Visalia/Fresno
- Tulare County Federal Credit Union
- Valley Oak Credit Union

#### Small Business Members:

- ARA Kaweah Dialysis Center
- Gong Cha: Boba Teas,

Smoothies, Coffee & Mochi Waffles

#### Business Builder Nonprofit Members:

- Visalia Unified Teachers Association\*

#### Business Connector Nonprofit Members:

- McKellar Ranch Company, Inc.\*

#### Small Business Nonprofit Members:

- Stand Up for Victims\*

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

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**Eagle Mountain Casino** celebrated Veterans in November with a variety of events including a special Time Capsule Burial, a Tribal Veterans Celebration, Veterans Day Giveaway Kiosk Promotion, and had over 75 banners on display of Tule River Tribal Members that served in the military. In addition, to kick off November, the Casino donated \$15,000 to the Kern County Honor Flight for their first Native American Honor Flight. Eagle Mountain Casino also donated over 100 turkeys to the Salvation Army of Tulare County to help families in need, especially during the holidays.

**EECU** Mooney Branch treated **Visalia Police** officers with coffee and pastries in November to show their appreciation of law enforcement.



EECU & VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT



**Dentists of Visalia** are hosting a Toy Drive, with donations accepted to December 13th. As a thank you, donors will receive a 10% discount on treatments.

Congratulations to **Ashoori Jewelers** who celebrated 20 years in November!

**Arts Consortium** and **CASA of Tulare County** partnered to provide a monthly art night for kids involved in the CASA program.

**Fresno Yosemite International**



VISALIA BREAKFAST LIONS

**Airport** was ranked the fifth best airport for international travel during the holiday season by Upgraded Points, an online tool for traveler airline points and miles.

**Visalia Breakfast Lions** delivered 1,136 turkeys during November.

**Arts Visalia** hosted their opening reception of their Annual Holiday Show and Sale on December 1st. The public is encouraged to visit the gallery and browse the selection of artisan crafted gifts to December 23rd.

**Self-Help Enterprises** hosted a grand opening celebration of The Lofts at Fort Visalia, located at 340 E Oak Ave on December 7th. The celebration included the dedication of the Peter N. Carey Gallery, ribbon cutting, tour and open house of the multi-use facility in downtown Visalia.

**RIBBON CUTTINGS**



Circle J Event Venue hosted a ribbon cutting in celebration of their grand opening. Contact them at (559) 731-5090 for your next event space.



Graze Craze located at 3833 W. Caldwell Ave., hosted a ribbon cutting in November, marking their grand opening.



In celebration of their grand opening, MindDivers hosted a ribbon cutting. Contact them at (559) 734-3011 for your therapy needs.



San Joaquin Valley Homes hosted a ribbon cutting to celebrate their newest development Maplewood. Homes can be found at 536 N. Tracy St.

RETURNING  
MARCH 14, 2024

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# Thank you TO OUR PREMIER MEMBERS

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**VISIONARY:**



**REGIONAL LEADERS:**



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**MEDIA PARTNERS:**



**CITY UPDATE**

## Greetings of the Season



The chill in the air means winter is here and that the holiday season is underway. For those with visions of sugar plums dancing in their head, now is the time to check out the just released Visalia Parks & Recreation Winter Live & Play Activity Guide.

There is no need to wait for the next Corporate Games event to host a team-building activity, a company family fun day or office outing. The fa-la-la-la fun is here!

The holiday season is a great time to foster relationships among teammates and celebrate a year's worth of hardwork. For those looking to start the new year strong, events and programs run through next February 2024.

"We truly have something for everyone, whether you're looking to have a family night of fun or pick up a new skill," shares Kelli Kincaid, Parks & Recreation Director. "Our Winter

Live & Play Activity Guide includes classes, programs and events for Visalians looking to connect with their community."

The Winter Live & Play features multiple pages of community events (January 1 PAL Resolution 5K, anyone?), and serves as a community resource with details on City programs and holiday safety tips. With information from partnering organizations, including details on the Chamber's own Jr. CEO, the Winter Live & Play is online now at <https://bit.ly/winterliveplay>.

Users can flip through the pages and easily click on the activity of their choice to learn more. Registration can be easily completed online, or in-person.

For questions or more information, contact the City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department at [recreation@visalia.city](mailto:recreation@visalia.city) or 559-713-4365.

**LEADERSHIP**

Continued from page 2

divulge what is going to be developed on properties until everything is approved. This is a lengthy process and once items are approved it can take many years to even start construction, if they even start at all. Site plan review is also a major component in the planning and at this stage all entities such as utilities, safety, and developers play a role. They meet weekly and get updates in regards to the projects. This portion of the day session was extremely informative for all of us.

After a short break, we had the privilege of sitting with Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner and Carolyn Haynes-Thomas of CSET for a Red Table Talk to discuss the new Navigation Center. This center will provide wrap around services for individuals to assist in finding permanent housing. It will also support individuals experiencing homelessness, offering a pathway to regain stability, have access to services and to find housing. This center will mainly take referrals from Kings Tulare Homeless Coalition.

**BANK**

Continued from page 1

charge-free ATMs nationwide, and advanced mobile and on-line banking. Tri Counties Bank participates in the Cities for Financial Empowerment (CFE) Fund's BankOn program that seeks to ensure that everyone has access to safe and affordable financial products and services. Visit [TriCountiesBank.com](http://TriCountiesBank.com) to learn more. Member FDIC.

The Salvation Army has actively served Northern California since 1885. The Del Oro Division, headquartered in Sacramento, is responsible for administering all Salvation Army programs in 30 counties from the Central Valley to the Oregon border. Our programs vary from one community to the next, targeting the specific needs of each area. Our emergency assistance programs are intended to meet the immediate needs of struggling people by providing food and shelter, affordable child-care, workforce development, and other programs while guiding them to long-term self-sufficiency. The mission of The Salvation Army is to meet human need without discrimination wherever it exists.

# SUPPORT LOCAL

*this holiday season*

Business directory available on the Chamber website!

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