



# Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY

JULY 2016

## Supervisor's Message: County Formulates a Plan for New Office Spaces



The County is currently overseeing a space relocation and improvement program throughout several of our buildings in order to improve functionality and service to the public. There have been a number of events that have set the stage for these improvements over the past few years and plans are now underway to relocate County Departments into these buildings.

The County recently acquired the Tulare/Akers Professional Center, also known as the "CIGNA Building," located on the northwest corner of Akers St. and Tulare Ave. in Visalia. We negotiated a very competitive price for the building, with the final price being \$84 per square foot – much lower than what it would cost to build a building like this.

It is one of the most attractive office buildings in Visalia, and comes with several tenants that will bring a steady flow of revenues.

Not only was this purchase an economic benefit for the County, but this building will also be a great addition to

the County's inventory, allowing for a variety of different uses in the future to serve our needs.

Several County Departments have had a need for new office space, and this building will help to meet that. The Board recognized this need and authorized the relocation of the Fire Department and Tulare County Sheriff's Office from their current locations to the new building.

These relocations will consolidate public safety functions into one location and provide improved facilities for both departments.

We are also in the process of relocating the Human Resources & Development (HR&D) Department into one of the buildings vacated by the Tulare County Office of Education earlier this year. This new prominent location will place Tulare County HR&D in a prime location of visibility.

Once HR&D has been relocated, we are able to consolidate County Counsel under one roof. The final planned relocation will be consolidating the County's IT department into a building also vacated by the Office of Education. We will continue looking at remaining space needs in the Courthouse and Government Plaza going forward.

Once all moves are completed, we will see

substantial savings in the County's General Fund of approximately \$200,000; which creates fiscal flexibility for future services. In addition to the financial gains, there will also be improved functionality for the departments and services provided to the public.

This is an opportunity to provide enhanced work spaces and a better work environment for County employees within these departments, and ultimately these moves will provide us with opportunities for higher levels of service to the residents of Tulare County.

The project team is currently utilizing a committee-model to oversee and manage this relocation work. With the contribution of several staff and department representatives, we will make sure that the project is completed timely and within budget, while striving to meet the needs of the effected departments.

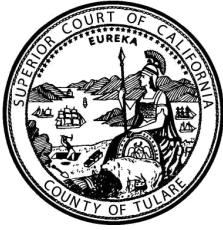
As work continues, we are hoping to finalize this planning phase and bring the initial construction plans forward for Board approval in September.

Pete Vander Poel,  
District Two  
Tulare County Board  
of Supervisors

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## Visalia Courthouse Training Drill - August 18



The County of Tulare, in partnership with the Tulare County Superior Court, Judicial Council, and Tulare County Sheriff's Office will be conducting an active shooter training drill.

The drill is scheduled to take place on **August 18, 2016**, between the hours of **12:00 pm and 4:00 pm** in the Visalia Division Courthouse located at 221 S. Mooney Boulevard in Visalia. **The building will be closed to the public during this training event.**

The exercise will involve sounds of gunfire to simulate an active shooter scenario, and will include mock victims.

Emergency responders including the Visalia Police Department, Tulare County Fire, and Visalia City Fire will be onsite in practicing

communication or security gaps.

As a result to this training event and the closure of the Visalia Courthouse, County agencies who conduct public business in the Visalia Courthouse will be limited on August 18.

Anyone looking to conduct any business activity within the Visalia Courthouse is encouraged to do so prior to 12:00pm on August 18. The courthouse

response procedures such as tracking down a gunman, clearing a building and providing emergency care.

Participants will provide valuable feedback after the exercise to assist the County in identifying any potential

will re-open during its normal business hours the following day.

For more information or public notice materials to post around your department office, contact Carrie Crane at 636-5000.



## August is Child Support Awareness Month

On July 26, the Board of Supervisors officially declared August as Child Support Awareness Month in Tulare County.

Board Chairman Mike Ennis presented the official proclamation to Child Support Services (CSS) Department Head Roger Dixon, and the department's Public Information Officer James Bonafe.

The department is currently on track to collect \$38 million for the 25,800 children they serve in the County and works towards its vision - that children can count on both parents for the financial, medical and emotional support they need to be healthy and successful.



For Child Support Awareness Month, CSS is teaming up with local partners including: CSET, Employment Connection, the Advanced Career Institute Truck and Welding School, Eagle Mountain Casino and others to provide a Resource and Employment Fair. Two days are scheduled for the fair, the first on August 17 at

the CSS Visalia Office and the other on August 18 at the CSS Porterville Office.

CSS is also working with the Tulare County Public Library in arranging library visits during the last week of August. For a full schedule of events, contact the Tulare County Dept. of Child Support Services at 713-5781.



## Employee Spotlight: Art Cesena



**Name:** Art Cesena

**Title:** Extra Help Parks & Grounds Worker

**Years of Service:** 4 years, 10 months

**Duties:** Parks & Grounds worker

**Family?**

Married to Flora, with four kids: two boys and two girls.

**Hobbies/Clubs/Organizations?**

Anything and everything Nascar.

**What is your most rewarding experience as a County employee?**

Just being a part of the Tulare County Parks & Recreation team.

**Please tell us something other employees might not know about you?**

I have a lawn business that I run on my days off.

**Where is your favorite place to visit in Tulare County?**

All the Mexican food restaurants we have.

**You were recently in the news for your aid in rescuing a young girl at Cutler Park, how does it feel to be dubbed a 'Hero' by the community?**

It made me feel good to do something to help someone else. I do not consider myself a hero, I was simply just doing my job.



## Tulare County District Attorney's Kids Court

Court awareness programs have evolved in several communities in response to the growing number of court cases involving children. Typically, these cases include children involved in allegations of physical or sexual abuse, neglect, or children who have witnessed a violent crime. As more of these cases are reported, more filings in criminal and juvenile court follow.

This has compelled a more critical examination of how court systems deal with children as victims and witnesses. The result has been the development of programs to improve the criminal justice response.

One such innovation is the "court school" concept. This approach rests on the belief that kids can learn to view the experience of going to court in a more positive and less intimidating manner.

When a child learns something about the judicial process and gains some familiarity with a courtroom, they are less likely to be frightened and more likely to participate fully in the process. Hence, justice can be served and the rights of all involved protected.

Tulare County Kids' Court is organized and operated by the Office of the District Attorney in collaboration with several agencies and interested persons to assist children through the judicial process by familiarizing them with the court environment and personnel. This is achieved by meeting the various individuals connected with the court system who explain what they do and respond to questions from both children and parents, all in a courtroom setting.

Professional Therapists along with trained volunteers interact with the children and their caretakers to help them

understand, express their own feelings, and deal with the stress associated with "going to court." The goal is to strengthen children to cope with the judicial process while affirming the responsibility to tell the truth.

In the past, child witnesses were prepared for the experience on an individual basis. Kids' Court makes it possible to help children get ready for court by participating in a supportive group experience.

Parents and caretakers are included in Kids' Court for they too experience a wide range of emotions that are filled with questions. Their support and understanding has significant impact on the ability of a child to cope with court and to be healed. Parents will have the opportunity to privately address any concerns or special needs.

For more information call 636-5471.





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## Supervisors Meet with Tule River Tribal Council



The Board of Supervisor met with the Tule River Tribal Council on July 20 in a special meeting to continue open communications between the Tribe and the County.

"This was one of the best meetings we've had with the Tribal Council discussing our common interests and concerns on mutual issues we face," stated Chairman Mike Ennis.

Discussions occurred on the following topics: Land Trust Fees and Applications; Casino Relocation; Tulare County Ambulance Services; the Tree Mortality Crisis; ongoing Drought Conditions; and much more.

## Sheriff Swears In New Deputies



Sheriff Mike Boudreaux told 16 new employees Monday that it's not easy to get hired at the Tulare County Sheriff's Office. Although hundreds of people want to work at the Tulare County Sheriff's Office, a very few are able to do it.

"Be proud of your family members today," he told the audience gathered for the swearing-in ceremony at the Board of Supervisors Chambers.

New hires include: Office Assistant Sarah Brassfield; Deputy I Jonathan Bethany, Joshua Akin, and David Nguyen; Deputy II Kristofer Schlossin, David Torres, and Levi Reitsma; and Correctional Deputies Patty Cisneros, David Berry, Joseph Calderon, Brandon Wilder, Guadalupe Romero, Erika Navarrete, Rogelio Moreno, Marylu Ayon, and Christopher Durkee.

Congratulations to you all and welcome to the Sheriff's Office!

### AROUND TULARE COUNTY

Around Tulare County is published once a month as a service to the public. Unless otherwise noted, articles are written by County staff. For additional information, contact Carrie Crane.

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### JULY / AUGUST COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

| Event/Meeting: (Date/Time)                               | More Information: |
|--|-------------------|
| Board of Supervisors Dark—No Meeting: August 2           | (559) 636-5000    |
| Board of Supervisors Meeting: 9 a.m. August 9, August 16 | (559) 636-5000    |
| Tulare County Planning Commission: 9:00 a.m. August 10   | (559) 624-7000    |
| Tulare County Youth Commission: 3 p.m. August 15         | (559) 636-5000    |
| Water Commission: 3 p.m. August 8                        | (559) 636-5000    |

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On County News?**

**Be sure to "Like" The County Facebook and Twitter Fan Pages:  
[Facebook.com/CountyofTulare](https://www.facebook.com/CountyofTulare) and [@CountyofTulare](https://twitter.com/CountyofTulare)**



**Places to Go Play:** Cutler Park is located 5 miles east of Visalia on Hwy. 216 as you drive toward the community of Ivanhoe. The 50-acre park was founded in 1919 and is home to a large stand of heritage-quality Oak trees. The park has a large playground and several picnic areas. Learn more about Cutler Park and other places to "Go Play" at [www.tularecountymap.com](http://www.tularecountymap.com).