



# Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY

AUGUST 2017

## Supervisor Message: Capitalizing on the Impacts from Drought



The last drought to hit California was extreme and gained notoriety as a statewide disaster. But no area was impacted more than Tulare County, especially in our unincorporated communities.

As bad as the effects of the drought were there was a silver lining. For Tulare County, that was in the form of state and federal grants to make permanent improvements.

Extensive media coverage informed the world about the situation in East Porterville. East Porterville benefited from the dollars provided by the drought relief and is now getting connected to a permanent water system.

But other communities around the County also suffered greatly from the drought and we are pleased to finally get more permanent solutions for them as well with monies made available to us.

One in particular falls within

my district, the community of Monson. The nearly 200 residents that make up the community of Monson never had access to a central water system – only a supply from private wells that suffered from nitrate contaminations as well as drought failure from a plummeting water table.

For many years, we tried to find sensible and affordable solutions to this decades old problem, but it was not until this last drought that we solved the problem.

I am proud to share that after years of work, homes in Monson will finally get connected to a reliable water distribution system next month.

The new community well has been constructed and the project's first phase to connect a group of 30 homes is set for September. Work is underway to organize a big community celebration in Monson to honor this monumental occasion.

The second phase of the project proposes an additional water distribution infrastructure that will interlink to the nearby community of Sultana.

While the drought exacerbated the water problems in Monson, it also provided unique financing

opportunities from Federal and State agencies. Historically communities like Monson, comprised of individual wells, have not been eligible for traditional water system grant programs. However, in this last drought innovative funding programs were developed.

In total, the County was able to collect \$2.11 million in secured funding for this project. Making the entire project possible.

Overall I want to express our gratitude to all the State and Federal funding partners, Self-Help Enterprises, the City of Dinuba, and most importantly the Monson-Sultana communities for coming together to make this water system a reality.

Steve Worthley,  
District Four  
Tulare County Board of  
Supervisors

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## Ave 280 Widening Project Groundbreaking

**AUGUST 23, 2017**

**10:00 am**

Visalia First Assembly

(Near the Miracle League of Visalia Building)

3737 W. Akers, Visalia

**COME CELEBRATE WITH US!**

RSVP: Nancy Woods (559) 624-7000 [nlwoods@co.tulare.ca.us](mailto:nlwoods@co.tulare.ca.us)



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## County Employee Named Paralegal of the Year

The California Alliance of Paralegal Associations (CAPA) named Kari Martin-Higgins as the 2017 Paralegal of the Year at their annual conference held in June at the Wyndham Hotel Visalia. Martin-Higgins was honored by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors for her prestigious designation during their Aug. 1 board meeting.

Martin-Higgins has worked as a paralegal for 17 years and has served the County of Tulare as a paralegal for four years in the Tulare County Counsel Office. She is a Certified Paralegal with an Advanced Certified Paralegal Credential through the National Association of Legal Assistants, and a California Advanced Specialist in Discovery from the Commission for Certification for California Paralegals.

"Tulare County is fortunate to have wonderful employees that have an impact beyond their normal job duties," stated



Chairman of the Board, Pete Vander Poel during Tuesday's Board meeting. "Kari is a shining star in her paralegal field and Tulare County Counsel is a stronger office because of her skill set and others like her."

Each year the California Alliance of Paralegal Associations identifies one person they believe exemplifies the role of a paralegal in California. Each CAPA member association from throughout the state submit nominations for this prestigious award, and Martin-Higgins of Tulare County rose to the top of the list.

Martin-Higgins provides invaluable assistance to Tulare County Counsel's Office in handling complex and delicate litigation on behalf of the County; also in identifying and implementing economic ways of fulfilling its complex, and often burdensome, discovery obligations.

"Kari is a great asset to the paralegal profession," stated Tulare County Counsel, Deanne Peterson. "She continually seeks to broaden her skills and the skills of other paralegals statewide. Kari works very hard to improve the quality of legal work in our community."

She remains active in the community creating training opportunities and supporting efforts to improve the skills of professional paralegals. Martin-Higgins is also active in the Sequoia Paralegal Association, holding various offices, and has been a member of the Board of CAPA for the past three years.

## Cook Appointed as Interim County Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector



On August 8, the Board of Supervisors appointed Cass Cook as the Interim County Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector, following Rita Woodard's expected retirement in October.

Woodard, who has served the County for nearly 30 years, recommended Cook for the position. Cook currently serves as the Assistant Auditor Controller under Woodard.

"His experience has uniquely prepared him for the job," said Woodard before the Board of Supervisors.

Cook has upwards of 15 years experience in local government having worked for the City of Dinuba and for the City of Visalia in various finance positions, prior to joining Tulare County in 2016.

"It's been a pleasure working in public service and I look forward to my future service to the people of Tulare County," shared Cook.

Looking to the future, Cook expressed to the Board his priorities for the department. His primary focus will always be customer service as a core value for the Auditor-Controller and Treasurer-Tax Collector offices. In addition, he would like to keep open transparency policies for the agency and maintain growth of its current standards of excellence.

Cook holds a Bachelor's degree as well as a Master's degree in Public Administration from Brigham Young University. He will begin his new role as Interim County Auditor-Controller/Treasurer-Tax Collector on October 9, 2017.



Have a program you want to highlight? Please send suggestions to:

[newsletter@co.tulare.ca.us](mailto:newsletter@co.tulare.ca.us)

## Another Successful Year of Summer Night Lights

The Step Up program just wrapped its 7<sup>th</sup> year of Summer Night Lights. This program is a collaboration between Tulare County and various communities to offer positive and fun programs for youth during their summer vacation.

This year, 17 communities throughout the County participated in the program.

The vision of Summer Night Lights is to provide safe and fun recreational opportunities for kids and their families during the summer season. We all know how important it is to keep kids active and engaged during summer vacation!

By providing positive activities for kids, Summer

Night Lights aims to reduce incidences of criminal activity committed by and against youth during the time they are not in school. These events include free



food, activities, and entertainment for the whole family.

Participating communities included: Alpaugh, Allensworth, Cutler-Orosi, Dinuba, Ducor, Earlimart, Exeter, Lindsay,

London, Pixley, Porterville, Tipton, Tulare, Strathmore, Visalia, Woodville, and Woodlake.

Summer Night Lights would not be possible without the support of community partners such as the Boys and Girls Club, Proteus, Porterville Kiwanis Club, McDermott Field House, CSET, WIB, Tulare County Sheriff's Department, Tulare County HHSA, local Parks and Recreation departments, school districts, community town councils, and local churches who stepped up to plan, organize and host these events.

Some examples of the activities offered this year were swim nights, movie nights, luau parties, barbeques, concerts, and much more!



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## ^ Above - Child Support Awareness Month

On August 1, Tulare County Board of Supervisors declared the month of August 2017 as Child Support Awareness Month in the County. Pictured with Supervisor Vander Poel is staff from Child Support Services with their proclamation.



## ^ Top Right - A Banner Day for Temperance Flat Dam

Supervisor Steve Worthley serves as President of the San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority and signs the completed bond application on August 14. The official application was sent to the CA Water Commission for Water Bond funds to build Temperance Flat Dam, a water storage project for the south valley.

## &gt; Right - Tulare County Fire Turns 10

Last month, Tulare County Fire Chief, Charlie Norman celebrated with the Board of Supervisors the 10th anniversary of the Tulare County fire Department, a milestone achievement. Chief Norman highlighted past achievements of the department and shared future goals to better serve the people of Tulare County.



## 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 Monteiro.

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## UPCOMING COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, AND MEETINGS

## Event/Meeting: (Date/Time)

## More Information:

Board of Supervisors Meeting: 9:00 a.m. August 22, August 29

**No Meeting: September 5**

(559) 636-5000

Tulare County Planning Commission: 9:00 a.m. August 23, September 13

(559) 624-7000

Tulare County Water Commission: 3:00 p.m. September 11

(559) 636-5000

Tulare County Youth Commission: 3:00 p.m. September 18

(559) 636-5000

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[Facebook.com/CountyofTulare](https://www.facebook.com/CountyofTulare) and [@CountyofTulare](https://twitter.com/CountyofTulare)**



**Places to Go Play:** Ridge Creek Dinuba Golf Club has a 7,482-yard championship golf course created by noted golf course designer John Fought. This golf course boasts one of the longest par fives in California, measuring out at a massive 653 yards. This 18-hole public premium golf course features the largest driving range west of the Rockies (more than 25 acres) as well as Three Finger Jack's. Learn more about Ridge Creek Dinuba Golf Club and other places to "Go Play" at [www.tularecountymap.com](http://www.tularecountymap.com).