



Around Tulare County

Delivering Information about Tulare County - February 2011

Chairman's Message: 2011 State of the County



Note: Excerpt from the January 25, 2011 State of the County Address.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for your attendance at today's meeting. It is truly a pleasure and honor to hold office as a public servant, and, this year, as your Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

It's been quite a year since we last gathered to hear Supervisor Worthley talk about the state of Tulare County.

Like all California counties, there were many challenges in 2010. The State dealt with its budget woes and the economy continued to slump. Both obstacles created negative impacts, forcing most Counties to lay off or furlough employees and reduce state-mandated services to close growing budget gaps.

Many Counties struggled with these tough and inevitable solutions. Other Counties, like Tulare County, who has remained fiscally conservative for years, managed to keep the budget gap lower than most of our neighboring Counties.

I would like to publicly thank past Chairman Steve

Worthley and my fellow Board members, other elected officials, our CAO and his staff, and County of Tulare department heads and employees for their collective efforts, contributions, and innovative ideas and leadership during 2010. Efforts from each stakeholder prevented deeper budget cuts.

While times were tough, there were many County accomplishments in 2010.

A few highlights include:

County of Tulare government continued to carry out Strengthening the Bottom Line, a program which encouraged all employees to brainstorm cost saving and revenue generating ideas, along with ideas to improve work processes. Cost saving ideas included paperless newsletters and paychecks, which saved the County thousands of dollars.

Tulare County's Water Commission obtained \$2 million in funding from the California Department of Water Resources to address the drinking and wastewater needs for disadvantaged communities in the Tulare Lake Basin.

Tulare County libraries received three U.S.D.A. grants for the rehabilitation of the Ivanhoe and Earlimart Library branches and the establishment of a book machine in Cutler. These grants will continue to improve access to the public.

The Sheriff's Department's 12

new Community-Based Officers (CBO) continued to serve the rural, unincorporated communities. The CBO's kept in constant touch with school officials, students, parents, business owners, town councils, community-based and non-profit organizations, and others in the community to promote public safety.

Staff has managed and continues to leverage Measure R, a half-cent sales tax approved by voters in 2006, to boost transportation funding for the county by 400 percent and doubled the amount of road projects started in its first three years. Some notable transportation projects that will start ahead of time include: improvements to Betty Drive, Bardsley Avenue, and Cartmill Avenue railroad crossings; improvements to State Route 190; and the early completion of Mooney Boulevard widening in Visalia.

County staff began working on the Central Valley Next-General Broadband Infrastructure Project, which will provide high-speed Internet service through 18 California counties, including Tulare County. This type of project is important for all counties who have residents in rural communities.

Mike Ennis, Chairman
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

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Read the full text of Chairman Ennis' 2011 State of the County Address by visiting www.co.tulare.ca.us and clicking on "State of Tulare County 2011" under the "In the News" feature.

Assistant Assessor/Clerk-Recorder Appointed



**Tulare County Assistant Assessor/Clerk-Recorder
Tim Mathos**

Tim Mathos has been promoted to the position of Assistant Assessor/Clerk Recorder by Roland Hill, who was recently elected and sworn into office as Tulare County Assessor/Clerk-Recorder.

Mathos, who has worked in the Assessor's Department for more than 23 years, assumed his new position previously occupied by Hill on January 3, 2011.

"Tim brings to the Assistant's position an extremely well-rounded working understanding of our department coupled with an unmatched work ethic, and, an excellent ability and desire to communicate and respond to fellow staff members, constituents, and stakeholders," Hill said. "We are very fortunate to have someone of Tim's characteristics and abilities as our new Assistant Assessor/

Clerk-Recorder."

Mathos began his career with Tulare County in 1987 as an Auditor-Appraiser. Since then, Mathos has served as an Appraiser III and Appraiser IV.

Mathos earned his Bachelors Degree in Accounting from California State University, Fresno and holds and Advanced Appraisers Certificate with the State Board of Equalization.

County Clerk's Office to Not Accept Passport Applications

"Passport applications taken at the Clerk's Division have been reduced by nearly 50 percent – from 1,230 in 2008 to 630 in 2010 – in the past two years."

Tulare County Assessor/Clerk-Recorder Roland Hill announced in January a regulation from the United States Department of State will halt the Tulare County Clerk's Division in Visalia from being a passport acceptance facility. The Clerk's Division stopped accepting passport applications on January 31, 2011.

Hill said the regulation, as part of the Federal Passport Acceptance Program, prohibits facilities that issue birth records from being an approved passport acceptance facility – a location where residents apply for passports. After residents fill out their applications, the paperwork is sent on to the United States Passport Services, who ultimately issues the passports. There are 14 passport acceptance facilities throughout Tulare County.

In 2003, the U.S. Department of State stopped designating new passport acceptance facilities that also issued primary birth documentation, unless the two functions were

physically separated and acceptance agents could not create, amend or issue birth documents. In 2003, Tulare County, and other jurisdictions, was grandfathered into the Passport Acceptance Program pending future actions.

In October 2010, the U.S. Department of State notified jurisdictions that facilities that issued birth certificates could no longer be a passport acceptance facility.

"This new regulation now causes us to be out of compliance in our Clerk's Division and so we're going to have to cease being a passport acceptance facility," Hill said.

Hill said passport applications taken at the Clerk's Division have been reduced by nearly 50 percent – from 1,230 in 2008 to 630 in 2010 – in the past two years. Hill credits access to the 14 other locations in Tulare County where residents can apply for passports for the decline.

Passport Acceptance Facilities:

City of Visalia – Human Resource Dept.

707 W. Acequia Ave.
Visalia, CA 93277
(559) 713-4300
Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Visalia Post Office – Town Center Station

111 W. Acequia Ave.
Visalia, CA 93291
(559) 732-2445
Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
*Photos taken here. By Appt. only.

Goshen Post Office

6901 Ave. 305
Goshen, CA 93227
(559) 651-1420
Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.; 1:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.
*Photos taken here.

*View full list of Passport Acceptance Facilities by visiting: <http://tinyurl.com/45pvcjx>

Employee Spotlight: Jared Smith



Tulare County Fire Lt. Jared Smith was named 2010 Firefighter of the Year by the Central Valley Fire Chiefs Association after saving a trapped elderly woman during a structure fire.

Tulare County Fire Chief Steve Sunderland said Smith was awarded the top honor in January at the Central Valley Fire Chiefs Association's annual Officer Installation meeting.

"This recognition is an award that is not awarded on an annual basis simply because the association likes to recognize firefighters," Chief Sunderland said. "It is an earned award. If the nominees do not clearly meet

the criteria for recognition, then no award is issued that year. Fire Lieutenant Jared Smith has demonstrated courage in the face adversity and continues to exemplify a fire service standard of professionalism every day."

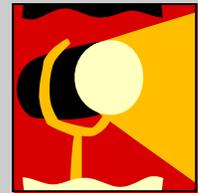
Chief Sunderland said Smith, along with multiple units from Tulare County, Farmersville, Visalia, and CAL-Fire responded to a wildland and structure fire June 8, 2010 just outside of Ivanhoe.

The first arriving units focused on structure protection. Upon arrival, firefighters were told a woman was trapped inside the home. Tulare County Fire Lieutenant Jared Smith entered the home and found an elderly woman who was recovering from surgery and evacuated her, a large dog, two chickens, and her cat. After rescuing the woman, Smith helped extinguish the fire, which limited the damage to one room in the house. The woman was transported

to Kaweah Delta Hospital for smoke inhalation, while the animals were turned over to the property owner.

Chief Sunderland said the Central Valley Fire Chiefs Association covers an area from Mariposa County to Tulare County. All fire service Chief Officers in the region are eligible for membership. As members they may nominate anyone from their respective agencies for the Fire Chief or Firefighter of the Year award.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Mike Ennis said he is proud of Lt. Smith and all members of the firefighting community for their efforts on June 8. The Board of Supervisors will honor Lt. Smith with a resolution at its Feb. 15, 2011 meeting.



There are many County employees who are doing outstanding things for their community outside of their job.

Do you know a County employee who should be in the spotlight? Let us know at:

newsletter@co.tulare.ca.us

Program Spotlight: UC Cooperative Master Gardener

The Master Gardener (MG) Program is a program of the University of California Cooperative Extension. The Cooperative Extension (CE) has been meeting local agriculture needs since 1913. The CE is located in Tulare and functions through a partnership with the University of California, the USDA, Tulare County government, and California residents.

Master Gardeners are members of our local communities who are trained by UC Cooperative Extension experts and managed by the county UCCE Offices. In

exchange for the training they receive, MG volunteers extend horticultural information and offer educational programs and garden-related demonstrations in their communities.

You will see Master Gardeners at local events with information booths, cultivating the Tulare County Courthouse and Ralph Moore rose gardens, at the Farmers Market, conducting Garden Festivals and training school and youth leaders to construct school gardens. If you have gardening questions the MGs are available on Tuesdays

and Thursdays' at their Helpline in the UCCE office in Tulare and Hanford.

To reach a MG, call and/or leave a message at (559) 684-3326 or (559) 582-3211 ext. 2736.

The Master Gardener program trains new volunteers every two years. The next Master Gardener class will be offered from January to June in 2012. If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener contact the Master Gardener office at (559) 684-3326.

Side Note:

The UC Master Gardener Program of Tulare and Kings Counties will host a landscape seminar called: "Gardening Central Valley Style."

The event is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 12 at the Visalia Convention Center.

Read more about the event in the March edition of the Around Tulare County newsletter.

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Side Note:

Directions from Visalia:

- Go west on Hwy 198, take Farmersville exit.
- Go north on overpass and turn right onto Ave. 296.
- Go east on Ave. 296 briefly to Road 168.
- Turn left on Road 168.
- Travel on Road 168 approx. 3 miles to Charter Oak Drive (at railroad tracks).
- Turn right on Charter Oak Drive, follow scenic road approx 1 1/2 - 2 miles.
- Dedication site on the right.

Election Tree to be Rededicated

One of Tulare County's most prestigious landmarks - once destroyed by vandals - will be rededicated by the Tulare County Historical Society in February.

The public is invited to attend the free rededication of The Charter Oak, better known as the Election Tree, at 11 a.m. on February 5. (See directions on Side Note)

The site of the Election Tree marks the location of the election by which Tulare County was organized on July 10, 1852, said Delora Buckman, president of the Tulare County Historical Society.

"This is where Tulare County local government was founded," Buckman said. "This is a must-attend event for residents who are interested in County history."

Tulare County Supervisor Phil

Cox said that first County election literally gave birth to the establishment of Tulare County.

"On that day, county voters elected our first Sheriff, District Attorney, County Clerk, Recorder, Treasurer, Coroner, and the first County Surveyor," Supervisor Cox said.

He noted the state Legislature took action on April 20, 1852 to formally authorize the organization of Tulare County as a governmental agency, appointed the first members of the Board of Commissioners (now known as Supervisors), and called for the election held just a few months later under the Election Tree.

Buckman said the event re-dedicates the Election Tree granite monument that marks the proximity of the first election in Tulare County. The original Election Tree Marker,

placed at the election site on a large granite stone in 1949, was illegally removed on June 12, 2009. Two suspects were arrested days later and were sentenced to 2 years and 8 months and 13 months in State prison.

"Community members from throughout Tulare County have shared their disbelief and concern over the destruction of this historic monument that is the birthplace of Tulare County," Buckman said.

The event will feature music, a Boy Scout Troop who will introduce the colors and comments from officials representing the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, Tulare County Historical Society and the Tulare County Sheriff's Department.

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 Jed Chernabaeff or Jeff Forbes.

Around Tulare County
2800 W. Burrel Ave.
Visalia, CA 93291
Phone: 559/636-5000
Fax: 559/733-6898

E-Mail/Subscribe:
newsletter@co.tulare.ca.us

Internet:
www.aroundtularecounty.com

FEBRUARY COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

Meeting: (Date/Time)

- Board of Supervisors' Meeting: Feb. 1, 15. 9 a.m.
- L.A.F.C.O. Meeting: Feb. 2. 2 p.m.
- Election Tree Rededication: Feb. 5. 11 a.m.
- Tulare County Youth Commission: Feb. 7, 3 p.m.
- T.C.E.R.A. Retirement Planning Seminar: Feb. 8. 8 a.m.
- Tulare County Planning Commission: Feb. 9, 23. 9 a.m.
- T.C.A.G. Meeting: Feb. 22. 1 p.m.
- Tulare County Water Commission: Feb. 28. 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

More Information:

- 559/636-5000
- 559/624-7000
- 559/280-8547
- 559/636-5000
- 559/733-6576
- 559/624-7000
- 559/624-7000
- 559/636-5000



Places to Go Play: Lake Success is located at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley about eight miles east of Porterville on Highway 190. With the scenic Sierra Nevada in the background, Lake Success provides great fishing, boating, water skiing, camping, picnicking, and more. Learn more about Lake Success and other places to "Go Play" at www.tularecountymap.com.