



Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY – FEBRUARY 2012

Chairman's Message: 2012 State of the County



Note: Excerpt from the January 24, 2012 State of the County Address.

Good morning and thank you for your attendance at today's meeting. It is an honor to serve as Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors for the second time.

I would like to publicly thank past Chairman Mike Ennis and fellow Board members, elected officials, our CAO and his staff, and County of Tulare department heads and employees for their collective efforts, contributions, and leadership during 2011. Tulare County government truly has a diverse and highly skilled workforce.

This morning I would like to touch on Tulare County's financial situation, share some success stories from last year, and focus on a few of Tulare County's key issues moving forward.

I believe that the status of Tulare County Government is stable. As a result, we are financially sound. One of the main reasons why we are in good shape is our retirement system.

While other Counties are struggling with their pension systems, Tulare County's is 90

percent funded. We are better off than other jurisdictions because of conservative measures. Tulare County is no longer a training ground for other government agencies. It's a destination. Because our retirement system is sound, we are experiencing employment inquires from applicants who have serious concerns about their current retirement system.

Another measuring tool of our success involves staff reductions and furloughs. Many jurisdictions are still making hundreds of staff reductions and are sending employees home for 5, 10, and even 15 unpaid days through furlough programs. These furloughs, in some cases, mean deep salary cuts. In 2011, Tulare County offered our employees the cancellation of furloughs. As a result of this action, approximately 50 percent of our employees received almost a 2 percent increase in compensation. The remaining 50 percent of our employees turned down this increase in compensation. The Board certainly appreciates the cooperation and dedication of all Tulare County employees.

It's with great pleasure that I get to share some of the success stories that my fellow Board members and our employees have been apart of. For example:

- Measure R continues to be a great success. Highway 99 widening is under construction in Tulare County. We have

made major road improvements in our unincorporated communities and rural roads. Tulare County has more than 3,000 miles of road in our local system, therefore please be patient. We are doing our best.

- In our effort to increase transparency and accountability of County government, Chairman Ennis instituted the Speakers Bureau that provides our residents the ability to request our department representatives and elected officials to speak and answer questions in front of civic and non-profit organizations. Since its launch in June 2011, more than 25 requests from service organizations have been made. More than 1,200 people listened and asked questions of County representatives who have provided presentations regarding County services.

- The Customer Service Program has been developed and small focus groups are being conducted to evaluate and fine tune the program for roll out this year.

- The Sheriff's Department achieved its goal to reduce gang violence through the implementation of gang injunctions and specialized patrols.

Allen Ishida, Chairman
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

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Read the full text of Chairman Ishida's 2012 State of the County Address by visiting www.co.tulare.ca.us and clicking on "State of Tulare County 2012" under the "In the News" feature.

Davis Retires; Dr. Duerksen Appointed HHSA Director

“We are confident Dr. Duerksen will do an excellent job in her role as HHSA’s top official.”
Allen Ishida,
Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors announced on Jan. 24 the appointment of Dr. Cheryl Duerksen as director of Tulare County’s Health & Human Services Agency.

Dr. Duerksen will fill the position previously held by John Davis, who retired Jan. 20 after serving as HHSA’s director since 2006. In total, Davis served Tulare County in various roles for more than 30 years, including Director of Human Services and the Director of the Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging (K/T AAA).

Davis released this statement regarding his retirement:

“I am truly grateful that the Board gave me the opportunity to serve as Director of the Agency for these last several years. We built an exceptionally strong leadership team, and I retire knowing that I leave the

Agency in very good hands.”

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Allen Ishida said Tulare County is pleased to appoint Dr. Duerksen to the HHSA Director position.

“John’s public service career in Tulare County is second to none and the Board appreciates his dedication and leadership,” Chairman Ishida said. “We are confident Dr. Duerksen will do an excellent job in her role as HHSA’s top official.”

Dr. Duerksen has served HHSA since 1997 through a succession of roles beginning with Lead Psychologist, Assistant Agency Director and as the Director of Mental Health. Most recently, she was appointed as Associate Director.

“I’m excited to serve as director on behalf of the Board of Supervisors and

CAO,” Duerksen said. “John Davis has provided the Agency with exceptional leadership over the past five years and has paved the way for improving relationships with multiple organizations and agencies across the County.”

HHSA provides a full range of services to the people of Tulare County, including clinical and public health services; mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services; and social services, which includes children, adult and aging services.

“I look forward to continuing to solidify the ties we enjoy with our community, as the Agency continues to provide services to the families and consumers of Tulare County,” Duerksen said.

“Our hope is that by encouraging a sense of community and by providing families with information on available resources, Earlimart will be empowered to address problems including gangs and graffiti.”
Supervisor Pete Vander Poel

Earlimart to Host Step Up Event

Earlimart will host its first Step Up anti-gang summit in February.

The Step Up Earlimart Gang Awareness Event will be held from 4:40 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. on Thursday, February 2 at Earlimart Middle School, 785 E. Center Ave. in Earlimart.

Supervisor Pete Vander Poel, who represents Earlimart and southwest Tulare County, said the free event is designed for community members who are concerned about gang violence, drug activity, and keeping youth involved in positive activities.

“Our hope is that by encouraging a sense of community and by providing families with information on available resources, Earlimart will be empowered to

address problems including gangs and graffiti,” Supervisor Vander Poel said.

Organizers have arranged for a resource fair staffed by more than 15 community-based organizations, local government agencies and faith-based groups who will provide information to parents and youth. Participants will have opportunities to sign up and volunteer with various organizations in their community. Food will also be provided.

The event will also include a forum where a panel comprised of law enforcement, education, business, and faith-based officials will offer insight and solutions to community issues and answer questions from

attendees. Translation will be available during the presentation.

The following organizations have helped plan and organize the Step Up Earlimart Gang Awareness Event: Earlimart School District, Earlimart Town Council, Earlimart Rotary, Earlimart Swap Meet, California Highway Patrol, CSET, Tulare County Board of Supervisors, Tulare County District Attorney’s Office, Tulare County Fire Department, Tulare County Sheriff’s Department, and the Tulare County Probation Department.

For more information please contact Board of Supervisors representative Allison Pierce at 559/636-5000.

Spotlight: Tulare County Employees in the News



Keith Douglass (left) was promoted to Captain during a ceremony on Jan. 30.

There were plenty of County of Tulare employees who made the news in January.

Here's a list of appointments, promotions, and recognition that made our local papers and airwaves.

- Dr. Cheryl Duerksen was appointed as director of Tulare County's Health & Human Services Agency.
- Tulare County Sheriff Bill Wittman promoted Keith Douglass from Lieutenant to the rank of Captain during a ceremony on Jan. 30. Cpt. Douglass began his career with the Sheriff's office as a deputy in August of 1986.
- Three Tulare County public safety employees were recognized by The Knights of Columbus' 29th annual Public

Safety Night, according to the Visalia Times-Delta.

Tulare County Fire Department Captain Jason Elizondo was selected as an honoree because he continuously strives to improve his level of knowledge, his skills and abilities through training and education.

Deputy District Attorney Rick Tripp was recognized for his high level of public service. Tripp has prosecuted 36 jury trials to date, including two homicide cases in 2011.

Tulare County Sheriff's Department Deputy Rick Bourez was selected as an honoree because of his work in the community of Goshen and for severing as a lead investigator in several cases.

In other news...

- The Board of Supervisors voted to formally oppose the California High Speed Rail Project.

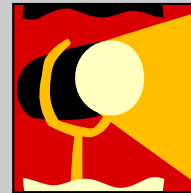
Tulare County's Animal Control Shelter received donations of food and blankets from Tipton Elementary School students on

Jan. 10.

- The Tulare County Sheriff's Department uncovered a burglary ring in Poplar that deputies say was responsible for \$25,000 in theft.

- Several County Departments teamed up to create a new economic development website. The website, www.tularecountyeconomicdevelopment.org, went live on Jan. 25.

- The Tulare County Film Commission has been working with community partners to assist a group of students with their film project in Porterville. The film, "The Devout," takes place in the 1400's in England and follows a woman who must risk everything to save her friends and family from a mysterious death.



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: Library Offers Computer Classes

From using a computer mouse and search the Internet for jobs to putting together a PowerPoint presentation and writing a resume, the Tulare County Library offers a variety of computer classes each month.

Registration begins around the 15th of each month when the new class schedule comes out. The new class schedule begins each month.

Pre-registration is required for all classes. Each class is a one day session. For all Tulare County Library classes, call the Computer Lab at (559) 713-2719 or register in person.

These classes are in high-demand and space is limited. If you are not able to attend a class you have registered for, please call as soon as possible so the spot may be filled.

For addition information, you may call the computer lab at 713-2719.

Visit www.tularecountylibrary.org/computerservices.html

to view a full list of classes offered.

Want your program to be in the spotlight? Please send suggestions to:

newsletter@co.tulare.ca.us



"The Step Up Service Learning Grant Program projects have been effective in impacting the lives of Tulare County's youth and their respective communities in a positive manner." Allen Ishida, Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors

Grants Available to Tulare County High Schools

The Tulare County Youth Commission is accepting applications for the 2012 Step Up Service Learning Grant Program. The grant program provides \$25,000 in grants for public or private high schools in Tulare County.

The Step Up Service-Learning Grant Program funds small-scale, youth-directed projects that focus on reducing adolescent violent crime, aggression, delinquency and/or substance abuse. All proposals must include service-learning projects. Only public and private high schools are eligible to apply.

The Service Learning grant program allocates \$25,000 for grants to Tulare County High Schools. There is one grant of \$5,000 available in each Supervisorial district.

"The Step Up Service Learning Grant Program projects have been effective in impacting

the lives of Tulare County's youth and their respective communities in a positive manner," said Allen Ishida, Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors. "We look forward to funding innovative projects that will make a difference."

Projects funded in 2011 included a mentorship program in Exeter, school readiness sessions for middle and high school students in Orosi, design and installation of a soccer field in Tulare, and a summer garden in Visalia.

During the grant cycle, student participants enjoyed a day of team building at the Mc Dermont Field House in the city of Lindsay.

The deadline to submit an application for a grant is 5 p.m. on Friday, February 24, 2012. The Tulare County Youth Commission will review

the submitted grant applications and recommend to the Board of Supervisors which organizations should receive funding. The Youth Commission will vote on the funding recommendations on April 9, 2012. The final grant awards will be made on April 24, 2012 by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

Applications can be obtained by visiting www.stepuptc.com or by phoning (559) 636-5000. For more information, please contact Youth Commission staff Allison Pierce at (559) 636-5000 or agpierce@co.tulare.ca.us.

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.

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FEBRUARY COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

Meeting: (Date/Time)

L.A.F.C.O. Meeting: Feb. 1. 2 p.m.
Board of Supervisors' Meeting: Feb. 7, 28. 9 a.m.
Tulare County Planning Commission: Feb. 8, 22. 9 a.m.
Tulare County Water Commission: Feb. 13. 3 p.m.
Tulare County Youth Commission Meeting: Feb. 13. 3 p.m.
Tulare County Association of Governments: Feb. 21. 1 p.m.

More Information:

559/624-7000
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Places to Go Play: The Exeter Historical Museum, located at 125 South "B" Street, was constructed in 1913. The museum focuses on the history of Exeter, including Mineral King and Conifer in Sequoia National Park, Yokohl Valley, Rocky Hill and other surrounding landmarks. The Courthouse Gallery of the Arts is also located next door to the museum. Learn more about Exeter and other places to "Go Play" at www.tularecountymap.com.