



Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY — JUNE 2012

Supervisor's Message: County Fights Marijuana Grows



The proliferation of illegal medical marijuana grow sites in the San Joaquin Valley is alarming. In Tulare County, more than 600 grow sites were identified last summer and it is anticipated that more sites will be identified this year.

Our constituents view many of these sites as a threat to public safety. I agree.

For example, between October 2010 and October 2011, there were six homicides linked to marijuana grows in Tulare County.

Effects associated with medical marijuana activities also include an increase in crimes, specifically robberies, burglaries, assault, battery, carrying of illegal weapons, and a negative quality of life for areas surrounding such businesses or operations.

County staff from the Sheriff's Department, Resource Management Agency and County Counsel

are working hard to identify illegal grow sites, with eradication as the end result. The Board of Supervisors supports and appreciates the efforts of staff.

One way Tulare County seeks to combat illegal marijuana grow sites is through code enforcement's administrative process. The process includes responding to a complaint, inspecting the property, issuing notices of violation, re-inspecting the property several more times, and eventually, if the growers are still non-compliant, scheduling an administrative hearing. In years past the issue with the process was growers were able to harvest their crops before the administrative process was complete.

On May 8, 2012, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors took a step to solve that issue. We approved an amendment to a County Ordinance that will impact medical marijuana growing by reducing the amount of time a grower has to comply with code enforcement from 180 days to 30 days. The amendment also places a \$765 fee and a daily fine of \$100 per plant on violators.

Each member of the Board of Supervisors agreed at the May 8 meeting that this measure is an important public safety issue and feel that shortening this process could be a matter of life and death for constituents near the grow sites.

With this new measure in place, there has been success.

As of May 2012, code enforcement has received 69 complaints relating to medical marijuana. Of these, 27 have been referred to law enforcement for review and clearance for code enforcement, 23 sites have been abated, four will be receiving violation letters, and 15 are awaiting inspection by code enforcement and law enforcement.

To report a concern regarding a medical marijuana site, please call 559/624-7205.

Steve Worthley, District Four
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

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“Tulare County will not tolerate illegal medical marijuana operations in our unincorporated areas.” Board of Supervisors Chairman Allen Ishida.

County Seeks Injunctive Relief Against Marijuana Collective

In May, Tulare County filed for injunctive relief against a Cutler-based medical marijuana collective.

According to the complaint filed with Tulare County Superior Court, Tulare County alleges that the medical marijuana collective violates the requirements of County zoning ordinance, which states that marijuana collectives and cooperatives must be located on land zoned for commercial or manufacturing use within the unincorporated county. The collective is located in an agricultural zone. In addition, the complaint states the collective violates county ordinance by not being grown “within a secure, locked, and fully enclosed structure.”

Chairman of the Board of

Supervisors Allen Ishida said medical marijuana operations are a threat to the public safety of residents. From October 2010 to October 2011, there were eight homicides linked to marijuana operations. Since September 2011, there have been three attempted homicides linked to marijuana in Tulare County.

“Tulare County will not tolerate illegal medical marijuana operations in our unincorporated areas,” Chairman Ishida said. “We will continue to take the appropriate actions to combat illegal medical marijuana operations.”

This is not the first time Tulare County has sought injunctive relief against a medical marijuana collective. In August 2011, Tulare County won a

civil injunction against Foothill Growers Association Inc., an Ivanhoe-based cooperative of about 100 people with doctors’ recommendations to smoke or ingest marijuana to treat symptoms of health conditions.

The Superior Court found that the Foothill Growers Association violated an ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2009, which states that marijuana collectives and cooperatives must be located on land zoned for commercial or manufacturing use within the unincorporated county.

Speed Limit Enforced on Kings River

The Tulare County Sheriff’s Department will enforce County Ordinance Section 2-03-1140(f), which limits vessel speeds to 5 miles per hour when water levels in the Kings River are low.

Tulare County Parks Manager Neil Pilegard said the reduced speed limit will be

lifted once the flows in the Kings River reach 800 cubic feet per second (cfs), as measured at the Highway 99 bridge crossing.

The Kings River Watermaster estimates that flows will remain at this level at least through the end of May.

“We apologize for any

inconvenience this may cause. However, the health and safety of our public is and will remain the County’s number one priority,” Pilegard said.

5 BOATING SAFETY TIPS:

- 1. Be Weather-Wise:** If you notice darkening clouds, volatile and rough changing winds, or sudden drops in temperature, play it safe by getting out of the water.
- 2. Learn to Swim:** If you’re going to be in and around the water, proper boating safety means knowing how to swim.
- 3. Avoid Alcohol:** Practice

boating safety at all times by saving the alcohol for later.

4. Make Proper Use of Life Jackets: Assign and fit each member of your onboard team with a life jacket prior to departure.

5. Develop a float plan: A float plan includes where you are going and how long you plan to be gone. It can also include the following informa-

tion: name, address, and phone number of trip leader; name and phone number of all passengers; boat type and registration information; trip itinerary; and types of communication and signal equipment onboard.

Spotlight: Tulare County Employees in the News

Pot Bust

The Sun Gazette reported in May that the Tulare County Sheriff's Department eradicated a marijuana garden that included millions of dollars worth of plants.

Sheriff's employees responded to the 18400 block of Ave. 312 near the Kaweah River and found more than 2,500 marijuana plants.

If allowed to mature, the plants could have produced more than 5,000 pounds of processed marijuana.

Four suspects out of the Los Angeles area were arrested in connection with the cultivation of marijuana.

RMA Awarded Grant

The Times-Delta reported that the Tulare County Resource Management Agency received a \$939,861 grant to go toward pilot programs

for new infrastructure systems in disadvantaged, rural communities.

The grant is part of a \$45.3 million grant program funded by Proposition 84 bonds.

Sheriff's Promotions

The Tulare County Sheriff's Department hosted a ceremony to announce five promotions.

Alfred Galafate, Robert Moore, and Juan Garza were promoted to lieutenants. Santos Delgado and Gerald Calderon were promoted to sergeant.

Supervisors Award Grants

The Board of Supervisors awarded \$15,000 for the annual Step Up Service Learning Grant Program, the Times-Delta reported.

Three schools received \$5,000 service learning grants to perform community

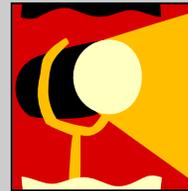
projects.

Grants and projects are:

Visalia Technical Education Center: Students will design, create and install two tile mosaic murals on the new COS Humanities Garden outdoor produce-processing pavilion.

Granite Hills High School: Students will take part in a drum line program while also learning to read music.

Burton Pathways Charter High School: Students will attend summer camp that teaches middle and elementary school students how to produce an online newspaper.



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: Customer Service Training

Residents who interact with Tulare County government employees can expect an even greater level of customer service in the future thanks to a new program unveiled at a May Board of Supervisors meeting.

The County Customer Service Training Program aims to provide customer service training to all County employees through lectures, videos, and interactive sessions. More than 4,000 Tulare County employees will participate in the program over the next two years. Each new hire will be required to take the training.

Fifth District Supervisor Mike Ennis, who pushed for the creation of a countywide customer service program in 2011 while serving as Chairman, said he is pleased that the initiative came to fruition.

"Customer service is the lifeblood of any successful business, including local government," Supervisor Ennis said. "Thousands of residents utilize Tulare County services every day. These residents expect and deserve great customer service."

Prior to developing the program, an outside consultant conducted an evaluation of Tulare County's ability to

provide quality customer service. The evaluation, which included internal surveys and mystery shoppers, showed that, overall, employees were providing good customer service.

"Day-in and day-out our employees strive to satisfy and meet the public's needs," said Allen Ishida, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "This program will ensure that we will maintain and elevate our level of customer service."

Implementation of the customer service program will begin in the first week of June.

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

newsletter@co.tulare.ca.us

County Library Improves Access to Library Patrons

“Based on the success these book machines have had in other communities, we are looking to expand this program to provide more access to underserved communities that do not have access to a public library.” County Librarian, Brian Lewis

Library patrons in Tulare County will have two more ways to check out their favorite reading materials.

Tulare County Deputy Librarian Jeff Scott said the library is expanding access to residents through making 30 Nook e-readers available and by purchasing two additional Lending Library book machines.

Nook e-reader

Scott said 30 Nook e-readers are available for check out at the Visalia Branch. In the first week of availability, all Nooks were checked out. Patrons who are interested in checking one out should contact the library.

The electronic devices are pre-loaded with titles with five different genres to choose from: romance, mystery, young adult, non-fiction and best sellers. Each patron can check

out the Nook for up to 21 days.

The introduction of Nooks to Tulare County Library patrons will be limited to the Visalia Branch. If the program is successful, Scott said the e-readers will be made available at other branch libraries. Funding for the Nooks was made available by a \$3,000 grant from the Tulare County Library Foundation. The funding was used to purchase the Nooks and electronic titles.

Lending Library Program

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors approved the sole source purchase of two Lending Library book machines for the communities of Tipton and East Porterville. A lending library is an automatic book machine that makes hundreds of books available to residents who choose to use library services.

A lending library machine is simple to use. Residents can come to the machine day or night, scan their library card, and select the book they would like. For example, if they see a children’s book that they like, they can simply select the letter number combination to retrieve the book.

“This is a pilot project that the Tulare County Library System is extremely proud of,” said Brian Lewis, County Librarian. “Based on the success these book machines have had in other communities, we are looking to expand this program to provide more access to underserved communities that do not have access to a public library.”

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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JUNE COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

Meeting: (Date/Time)

Board of Supervisors’ Meeting: June 5 (10 a.m.), 19, 26. 9 a.m.
L.A.F.C.O. Meeting: June 6. 2 p.m.
Tulare County Water Commission: June 11. 3 p.m.
Tulare County Planning Commission: June 13, 27. 9 a.m.
Tulare County Youth Commission Meeting: June 18. 3 p.m.
Tulare County Association of Governments: June 18. 1 p.m.

More Information:

559/636-5000
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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.