



# Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY – MAY 2013

## THANK YOU, COUNTY EMPLOYEES!

The Board of Supervisors announced the 2012 Employee of the Year in April. (See Employee Spotlight.) In addition, there will be Service Award presentations in May. Here's what the Supervisors are saying about County employees.



"It's an honor and pleasure to recognize our employees each year. You are the backbone of this County. Thank you for all you do. We appreciate your service." **Allen Ishida, District One Supervisor**



"We appreciate all your efforts and thank you for all that you do for Tulare County and our residents." **Pete Vander Poel, Chairman**



"I've always been impressed with the level of professionalism of our employees. Thank you for the customer service you provide and your caring, kind nature." **Phil Cox, District Three Supervisor**



"Any success that we have as a County is entirely reliant upon the people who work for the County. The number one asset of the County is its people. I want to thank you on behalf of the Board for the work that you do for our County." **Steve Worthley, District Four Supervisor**



"Thank you for what you do every day. You are the eyes and ears of Tulare County. You are Tulare County. We are proud of what you do on an daily basis." **Mike Ennis, District Five Supervisor**

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## D.A.'s Office Unveils Victims Memorial Quilt



The Tulare County District Attorney's Office hosted its 13<sup>th</sup> annual Victims Memorial Quilt Unveiling on April 24.

The Victims Memorial Quilt is created of quilt squares, each of which commemorates a victim who was murdered or a victim who died as a result of a drunk-driving incident. The squares are created by family members and loved ones to remember and celebrate the lives of victims who have been lost due to violence.

The event was held in

conjunction with National Victims' Rights Week.

The unveiling ceremony included testimonials, live music, and words of compassion from public officials.

"The Office of the District Attorney believes that every victim - both legally and morally - is entitled to the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion," said Tim Ward, Tulare County District Attorney. "Our office is

aware that victims and their families are dealing with emotional and, often, physical pain and we strive to ensure that their experience with the criminal justice system is a positive step toward healing."

District Attorney Ward said the Victims Memorial Quilt Unveiling ceremony is an extremely moving tribute and all members of the public are invited to attend to extend their support for the families and loved ones of all victims of violence.

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## Step Up Youth Challenge Wraps Up



A team of students from University Preparatory High School (UPHS) won the "Best Overall" award in the high school portion of the annual Step Up Youth Challenge, which concluded April 25 with a red carpet awards ceremony at the Visalia Fox Theater. The UPHS students, along with teams from five other high schools and 13 middle schools, worked October through April to identify a community need

and create a program to address that need.

UPHS students developed a multimedia teen pregnancy prevention program. The program, which was designed for middle school audiences, is performed on stage with a mix of video interviews with teen parents and short play vignettes.

For their efforts, the UPHS team was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Tulare County Gang Prevention Task Force.

The Task Force also awarded \$2,500 grants for projects in Innovation, Sustainability, Meeting the Need and Impact Categories. Valley Life Charter School in Visalia won a \$2,500 grant in the Innovation category for their partnership program with the Visalia Rescue Mission.

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## May is Mental Health Awareness Month



May is Mental Health Awareness Month. The Health & Human Services Agency, along with the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, is setting out to raise awareness, engage the community, and explore pathways to wellness by holding events and training opportunities and hosting educational booths throughout the month of May. Details

about events can be found on the Tulare County HHSA Facebook page, at [www.tchhsa.org](http://www.tchhsa.org), at <http://bit.ly/MHAM2013>, or by calling Tulare County HHSA Mental Health at 559-624-7445."

## EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR: KEVIN KEMMERLING



Tulare County Sheriff's Department Sergeant Kevin Kemmerling had a busy year in 2012. He played an important role in the County's eradication efforts of illegal marijuana grow sites and helped launch an education campaign to prevent people from drowning.

These examples are just a couple of reasons why the Board of Supervisors announced in April that Sgt. Kemmerling is the 2012 Tulare County Employee of the Year.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Pete Vander Poel said more than 130 County of Tulare employees were nominated from 18 different departments.

"There are thousands of County employees who are passionate about their jobs and duties, however, only one can be selected each year," Chairman Vander Poel said. "The thing that separated Kevin from all of the others is his exceptional willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. I commend Kevin and all other nominees for making a difference and bringing

extraordinary efforts to work day-in and day-out."

Sheriff Bill Wittman offered praise to Sgt. Kemmerling prior to his acceptance of the 2012 Employee of the Year plaque.

"When we talk about Kevin, we talk about his can do attitude, his hard work, his loyalty, and his commitment to the people in this community," Sheriff Wittman said while addressing the Board of Supervisors. "The people around him look up to him, they depend on him, and he is quick to go out day and night and help folks. That's why he is our employee of the year."

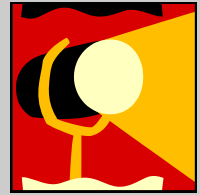
Sgt. Kemmerling became a volunteer for the Sheriff's Search and Rescue team and provided his assistance as an EMT from 1999 through 2004. At that time, he decided to attend the police academy and apply for a sworn position with the Sheriff's Office. He was hired by the Sheriff in October of 2004 and began working at the Men's Correctional Facility.

In February of 2006, he became the Springville Resident Deputy then moved to the Sheriff's Tactical Enforcement Personnel Team in July of 2008. In March 2010, Kemmerling was promoted to Sergeant and has been assigned to the Porterville Patrol Division since.

Sgt. Kemmerling has specialized training and assignments as the SWAT team leader, Dive team, Rope Rescue, Armorer/Gunsmith, Tactical Repelling Instructor, Aerial Observation, Rifle and Quad (ATV) certifications. All of these attributes helped the County in 2012.

For example, Sgt. Kemmerling was able to lead and effectively complete the investigations, prepare search warrants, and collect information relating to illegal marijuana grow sites – all while maintaining regular patrol operations.

In addition, Sgt. Kemmerling took the lead to develop an approved course and helped train multiple law enforcement agencies on how to utilize and properly deploy throw bags to drowning victims. The throw bag training has increased the likelihood to rescue the life of a person on the river versus the recovery of a body. Sgt. Kemmerling also developed a water safety handout that was distributed to campsites within Tulare County during holiday weekends.



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

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**Tulare County Maintains Good Credit Rating**



International credit rating agency Fitch Ratings affirmed stable credit ratings for Tulare County's implied general obligation and certificates of participation (COPs) series on April 17, 2013.

County officials say the stable credit ratings will have positive implications should the County seek to finance future capital projects such as new construction, expansion, renovation, or replacement projects to facilities.

Citing Tulare County's stable economy, healthy financial position, and manageable long term liabilities, Fitch Ratings affirmed the implied general obligation at AA- and the COPs series at A+. An "A" assignment denotes high credit quality while an "AA" assignment denotes very high credit quality, according to Fitch Ratings.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Pete Vander Poel

said the affirmation of stable credit ratings is reflective of Tulare County's strong financial performance during tough economic times.

"The Fitch rating issued is fantastic news," Chairman Vander Poel said. "This rating is validation of the County's strong financial position that has resulted from fiscally responsible actions by the Board and County Administration."

County Administrative Officer Jean Rousseau said the stable credit ratings will save taxpayers' money should Tulare County choose to borrow money in the future because the positive ratings allow for more flexibility and lower interest rates in financing long-term projects such as roads and facilities.

At the April 16th Board of Supervisors meeting, Rousseau reported that Tulare County's remaining

\$16.4 million COPs debt is scheduled to be paid off by August 2015.

"When our COPs debt is paid off, the Board of Supervisors will consider issuing more debt or take a 'pay as you go' approach when paying for future capital projects," Rousseau said. "If they decide to issue a bond, we will be in a great position to obtain low interest rates."

**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.

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

Internet:  
[www.aroundtularecounty.com](http://www.aroundtularecounty.com)

**MAY COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS**

**Meeting: (Date/Time)**

**More Information:**

Board of Supervisors' Meeting: 9 a.m. May 7, 14*, 21.	559/636-5000
Tulare County Water Commission: 3 p.m. May 13.	559/636-5005
Tulare County Association of Governments: 1 p.m. May 20.	559/624-7274
Tulare County Planning Commission: 9 a.m. May 8, 22.	559/624-7000

\*The May 14 Board of Supervisors meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in Tulare.



**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).