



# Around Tulare County

Delivering Information about Tulare County - November 2010

## Supervisor's Message: The Holiday Gift of 'Giving'



As we enter another holiday season, I would like to share a few personal things about myself that are usually kept for close friends. Over the past six years I have come to know many of you as friends, so I do not consider this a stretch. As a young boy growing up in Visalia, my mother taught me to be a giving and caring person. I remember trips to older ladies homes to help with gardens, yards, or just sit and talk. She also took me to places I did not know existed. We would take blankets or used clothing and drop them off. Often I would notice there was no heat in the home, or that the family

had gone to bed early. When asked why, the response: "it's cold." We don't have to look too far to see a need in our community. It doesn't matter where you live anymore, the north side, the south side, the other side of the tracks. With these economic times we are in right now, it could be our neighbor next door, or just down the street. My family has an annual tradition I would like to share with you. Each year about the beginning of December, we start looking for a family that might not have the ability to provide gifts or even a meal for their children. We plan for the whole month, hopefully without the family knowing, and on Christmas Eve we drop off gifts for each family member and a meal. Some years it hasn't been much, but we feel it important to teach our children the blessings of giving.

Right now there are several opportunities to give. For example, residents can participate or join in Toys for Tots, the Visalia Chamber of Commerce's Christmas Tree Auction, or the Visalia Emergency Aid Council's many holiday events. You name it, there is a flavor for everyone. I encourage each of you to dig down deep this year and let's look beyond ourselves and give to someone less fortunate than ourselves. It doesn't matter the size of the gift or the check, what matters is the giving. As we lift others in their time of need, we will be lifted as well.

Phil Cox, District Three  
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

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## Library Improves Services to Residents

Residents in northern Tulare County now have access to library books any time of the day.

On Nov. 1, Tulare County Library officials unveiled the Cutler Lending Library, an automatic book machine in Cutler which will make hundreds of books available to residents who choose to use library services.

"This is a pilot project that the Tulare County Library system is extremely proud of," said

Brian Lewis, Tulare County Librarian. "If successful, this project will serve as a model the library can use for other underserved, unincorporated communities that do not have access to a public library."

The Cutler Lending Library 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.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Steve Worthley, who represents Cutler and Orosi, said providing library book access to unincorporated communities is a good step to improving Tulare County's adult functional illiteracy rates, which stands at 41 percent.



Supervisor Worthley and residents in front of the Cutler Lending Library.

## Supervisors Expand Service Learning Program



“THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE STEP UP SERVICE LEARNING GRANT PROGRAM WILL MAKE AN IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH WHO PARTICIPATE,” DISTRICT THREE SUPERVISOR PHIL COX.

On October 12, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors approved a \$20,000 boost to the Step Up Service Learning Grant Program – a move that will allow the popular program to be implemented at middle schools countywide.

The Step Up Service Learning Grant Program is designed to fund school-based projects that target the involvement of school-aged youth who are gang-affiliated or at-risk of joining a gang. Since 2008, 18 high schools from throughout Tulare County have participated in the program. The Supervisors’ approval allocated funding for service learning projects at the middle school level.

“There is no doubt that the Step Up Service Learning Grant Program will make an immediate impact on the middle school youth who participate,” said District Three Supervisor Phil Cox. “Giving our youth the opportunity to participate in service learning projects is an effective way to positively

influence them before gangs can reach them.”

Supervisor Cox said the \$20,000 will be used for five selected schools – one \$4,000 grant in each Supervisorial district - to create student led projects that address gang involvement, crime and delinquency. Grant applications for middle schools will be available in November and will be due in January. Selected projects will begin in March 2011 and end in May 2011. The Tulare County Youth Commission will review the submitted grant applications and recommend to the Board of Supervisors which middle schools should receive funding.

Tulare County Youth Commission Chairwoman Janis Lehmann said the Step Up Service Learning Grant Program has already proven to be a success at the middle school level. In June, eight Green Acres Middle School students spent part of the summer beautifying their campus through the serving

learning grant program.

“The Board of Supervisors has made a firm commitment to providing positive experiences to some of Tulare County’s most troubled youth,” Lehmann said. “Allocating additional funding to support middle school service learning demonstrates that continued effort.”

Supervisor Cox said the success of the Green Acres Middle School pilot program prompted the Board of Supervisors to consider providing additional funding.

“This grant program, at the high school level, has proven to be a major success,” Supervisor Cox said. “We want that same success at the middle school level.”

For more information on the Step Up Service Learning Grant Program, please contact Youth Commission staff Jeff Forbes at 559-636-5000 or [jforbes@co.tulare.ca.us](mailto:jforbes@co.tulare.ca.us).

## County LAFCO Receives Statewide Recognition

Tulare County’s Local Agency Formation Commission and one of its members garnered statewide recognition last week at the California Association of Local Agency Formation Commission’s (CALAFCO) annual meeting.

CALAFCO awarded the Tulare County LAFCO the “Most Effective Commission” award. Julie Allen, a Tulare County LAFCO member, was elected as the public member representing the Central Region on the governing board of CALAFCO. The

annual meeting was held Oct. 7 in Palm Springs.

District One Supervisor Allen Ishida said the “Most Effective Commission” award was in recognition of the Tulare County LAFCO’s efforts in addressing environmental justice issues related to the City of Tulare’s recent 460-acre industrial annexation. The annexation area bordered a large disadvantaged community known as the Matheny Tract. Officials with the California Rural Legal Assistance,

the non-profit legal services organization representing residents of Matheny Tract, nominated the Tulare County LAFCO for the award.

Julie Allen of Springville was elected as the public member representing the Central Region on the governing board of the California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions (CALAFCO). Allen has served on the Tulare County LAFCO board for 16 years.

“It is an honor and privilege to be elected to represent the San Joaquin Valley, foothills and mountain communities of the south Sierra Nevada,” Allen said. “I will do my best to ensure that our voices, not always heard in Sacramento, will come through loud and clear.”

## Employee Spotlight: Tulare County Firefighters



Tulare County Fire Department employees and residents are working hard to support one of their own.

Pat Hinds, a 33-year veteran volunteer firefighter, was critically injured in July in a hit-and-run accident as he and Cpt. Gary Gregory battled a vehicle fire near Alpaugh. Since the incident, Hinds has spent the bulk of his time at a trauma center in Fresno and rehabilitating at a Visalia hospital. Hinds is almost ready to go back to his home in Alpaugh. When he goes back, however, his home should have a new look – inside and out.

That's because Tulare County employees, firefighters from other agencies, and friends and family have teamed up

to remodel Hinds' home.

"Right now he wouldn't know the house when he arrives," said Tulare County Fire Department Cpt. Gary Gregory. "We are changing everything around to make things fit."

Cpt. Gregory said volunteers are remodeling the kitchen, living room, and bathroom. A new air conditioner and venting was also installed with the help of District Two Supervisor Pete Vander Poel and District Three Supervisor Phil Cox.

"The local Fire Service and the Alpaugh community's commitment to Pat's recovery has been over the top," said Tulare County Fire Chief Steve Sunderland. "The number of people that have donated their time and resources to making Pat's home more accommodating is reflective of the respect folks have for Pat and his service to the County Fire Department. Quite simply, it is inspiring to see how

this is turning out for Pat, it could have been absolutely devastating."

Employees and volunteers involved in the remodel project include:

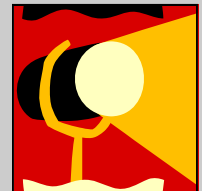
**Tulare County Firefighters:**  
Cpt. Derek Bontrager, Alpaugh  
Cpt. Gary Gregory, Alpaugh  
Lt. Jonathan Roberts, Alpaugh  
Lt. Chris Ellorin, Ivanhoe  
Lt. Tracey McKibbin, Lemon Cove  
Lt. Erik Withrow, Strathmore  
Stephen Bontrager, Alpaugh  
Richard Gaylord, Ivanhoe  
Celia Gregory, Alpaugh  
Mike Hinds, Alpaugh  
Susanna Rodriguez, Alpaugh

**Volunteers (Friends and family):**

John Greenwood, City of Visalia firefighter  
Wes Grim, CAL Fire  
Jack Thompson, CAL Fire  
Erin Rodriguez  
Caleb Rodriguez  
Emily Rodriguez  
Kevin Cox  
Matt Cox  
Supervisor Phil Cox  
Supervisor Pete Vander Poel

Thousands of dollars in donations have been contributed from the following organizations:

Lowe's: Discount Prices  
Tule Trash Company: Trash Hauling  
Western Farm Service: Trash Hauling  
Quikrete: Donated materials  
Hajoca Hvac: Discounted A/C Unit



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)

## Program Spotlight: Tulare County eTRIP

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District approved Rule 9410: Employer Based Trip Reduction (eTRIP) in December 2009.

The eTRIP Rule requires larger employers - including Tulare County government - to establish employee trip reduction programs. These programs are designed to encourage employees to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips, thus reducing pollutant emissions associated with work commutes.

The eTRIP rule requires employers to implement the plan in three phases during

the next three years. Phase I calls for the employer to implement "Marketing & Program Support" strategies. Phase II includes "Services & Facilities" strategies. Phase III includes "Transportation, Alternative Schedules, and Incentives" strategies.

**Impact to County of Tulare employees?**

In 2011, you will notice more information being distributed to you regarding the benefits of carpooling. For example, you will receive the eTRIP Tulare County newsletter quarterly, an eTRIP bulletin board will be posted at your worksite, and

employer rideshare events will be implemented within the next year.

In 2012 and 2013, during Phase II and Phase III implementation, you should notice additional on-site amenities to reduce vehicle trips such as: ATMs, bike racks, direct deposit, employer organized lunch delivery, and more. In addition, incentive programs will be created and implemented for you to carpool.

Should you have any questions or are interested in carpooling, please send an email to [etripct@co.tulare.ca.us](mailto:etripct@co.tulare.ca.us)



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

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

AROUND TULARE COUNTY - BACK PAGE

**“WE ARE GRATIFIED TO SEE THAT THE CHANGE IN HOURS HAS RESULTED IN BRINGING OUR PERMIT APPLICATIONS UP TO DATE. WE LOOK FORWARD TO PROVIDING AN EVEN HIGHER LEVEL OF SERVICE TO RESIDENTS IN TULARE COUNTY,” BOARD CHAIRMAN STEVE WORTHLEY**

**Changes at RMA Improves Customer Service/Efficiency**

A number of changes implemented in August at the Tulare County Resource Management Agency (RMA) are paying big dividends for people seeking services at its permit center.

RMA received approval from the Board of Supervisors in August 2010 to reduce the number of hours that offices at Government Plaza in Visalia were open to the public. RMA officials say the move enabled its building and planning staff – reduced by half in the last two years – to be more effective by providing at least 2.5 hours of uninterrupted work time daily. Other changes include: streamlining planner review of permits; consolidation of public inquiries; better utilization of office staff; and implementing measures to monitor performance.

RMA Planner Michael Washam said the changes at the permit center have resulted in an increase in customer service and overall efficiency.

“The largest factor in improved customer service is the change in hours to allow staff to review building permits and research and respond to public requests and questions,” Washam said. “Customer service is not only being open to receive applications and questions; it is also the ability to review and respond in a timely manner.”

Washam said there was typically a backlog of 45 to 60 permits prior to the change in hours.

“The permits backlog prior to the change in hours was an ongoing and continuous problem,” Washam said. “Within about five weeks of

the change in hours the backlog has dissipated and hasn’t returned.”

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Steve Worthley commended RMA for seeking ways to be more efficient in how it serves the public.

“We are gratified to see that the change in hours has resulted in bringing our permit applications up to date,” Chairman Worthley said. “We look forward to providing an even higher level of service to residents in Tulare County.”

In addition to the recent changes, RMA officials say they plan to improve efficiency even more by increasing online capabilities, streamlining and simplifying the review process, and providing customer service training to staff.

**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.

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**NOVEMBER COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS**

**Meeting: (Date/Time)**

**More Information:**

Board of Supervisors’ Meeting: Nov. 9, 30. 9 a.m.	559/636-5000
Tulare County Youth Commission: Nov. 15. 3 p.m.	559/636-5000
T.C.A.G. Meeting: Nov. 15. 1 p.m.	559/624-7000
Tulare County Water Commission: Nov. 22 4 p.m.	559/636-5000

For more information, visit: [www.co.tulare.ca.us](http://www.co.tulare.ca.us) and click on “County Calendar”



**Places to Go Play:** The Tulare County Museum of Farm Labor and Agriculture is located at Mooney Grove Park in Visalia. The 17,000-square foot structure showcases the people who have lived in, used and farmed the San Joaquin Valley during the past 500 years. Learn more about the Museum of Farm Labor and Agriculture and other places in Tulare County to “Go Play” at [www.tularecountymap.com](http://www.tularecountymap.com).