



Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY – NOVEMBER 2013

Supervisor's Message: Forests Need Better Management



Think about the damage the Rim Fire, California's third largest wildfire in history, caused recently.

From August through October, it was reported that the Rim Fire in Mariposa and Tuolumne counties torched 257,314 acres, or 402 square miles, destroyed 11 homes, three commercial properties, 98 outbuildings, injured 10 people, and cost taxpayers at least \$127 million to fight.

This type of crisis can happen in Tulare County.

Why?

Tulare County shares at least one thing in common with these counties – the Sierra Nevada mountains. These mountains are filled with forests, vegetation, natural habitat, and people, and comprise a large amount of our landscape. In Tulare

County, nearly a third of our land is covered by forests, which are largely dry and overgrown. A large scale wildfire in Tulare County can endanger residents, visitors, local businesses, and wildlife.

The impacts of such a disaster have been a significant concern in Tulare County for many years. The current forest management practices, guided by Congress and implemented by the United States Forest Service, which limit the amount of timber harvested, are increasing the threat of a disaster.

So what can we do?

There are advocates throughout the state pressing for forest management reform.

Progress is being made by two organizations that represent counties in California - the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC). CSAC and RCRC sent a joint letter to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources urging the creation of legislation related to forest management reform. According to the letter, reforms can be adopted "to

address active management, streamline environmental laws, and revise U.S. Forest Service's day-to-day approach to managing our forest."

One piece of proposed legislation that CSAC and RCRC support, HR 1526, also known as the Restoring Healthy Forests and Healthy Communities Act, would increase the level of the timber harvest. This legislation was approved in the U.S. House of Representatives and is now up for review in the U.S. Senate.

If you are concerned with current forest management practices, I would urge you to contact your United States Senators and urge them to support or craft legislation that would encourage better forest management practices.

Passing responsible forest management practices can prevent devastating wildfires in California, and, more importantly, in your own backyard in Tulare County.

Mike Ennis, District Five Board of Supervisors

Inside this issue:

SJOSTROM APPOINTED HR&D DIRECTOR	2
"FOOD FOR FINES" PROGRAM	2
FIX YOUR SPACE UPDATE	2
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: TEAM "NO CONTEST"	3
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: CROATIAN EXHIBIT	3
FLU SHOTS AVAILABLE	4
COUNTY DATES FOR EVENTS, ACTIVITIES	4

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“[Rhonda] is committed to cutting edge improvements within the department to assure it functions at a high level.”
Chairman
Pete Vander
Poel

Rhonda Sjostrom Appointed HR&D Director

On October 1, Tulare County Board of Supervisors appointed Rhonda Sjostrom as the Human Resources & Development Director.

Sjostrom has worked for Tulare County for more than 26 years, where she has held management positions with the County Administrative Office and Human Resources & Development. Most recently, Sjostrom served as Assistant Human Resources Director since September 2009.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Pete Vander Poel said the Board was pleased to hire an internal candidate out of a pool of 50

applicants.

“Rhonda has been a dedicated employee for 26 years and knows our organization extremely well,” Chairman Vander Poel said. “She is committed to cutting edge improvements within the department to assure it functions at a high level.”

As the Human Resources and Development Director, some of Sjostrom’s duties include: provide overall administrative and program direction in various human resources areas; recommend to the Board of Supervisors and/or County Administrative Office proposed policies, rules and procedures;

prepare, present, and administer the department budget; manage various employee benefit program; and oversee employee relations functions.

Sjostrom earned a degree in Mass Communication & Journalism with an emphasis in Public Relations from California State University, Fresno in 1983. She officially started on October 7, 2013 and will earn \$127,000 annually.

Sjostrom replaced Jeff Cardell, who resigned in July 2013 to take a position with the City of Fresno.

County Library Offers “Food for Fines” Program

Tulare County residents who have library fines can get a break on what they owe and help the hungry at the same time.

During the month of November, anyone who brings in non-perishable food items to any branch of the Tulare County Library can have their fines reduced or eliminated. One dollar per food donation will be deducted from existing fines, except for any charges for lost or damaged library

items. There is no limit to the amount of fine reduction. The food will be picked up by Foodlink for Tulare County and used to restock the pantries of food banks throughout the county. Items collected from the fifteen branches will be distributed in each branch’s local community and surrounding areas.

“Food for Fines” is a new collaborative program sponsored by the library and Foodlink. It will be held

semi-annually in the months of November and April. Library patrons can bring their books and donations November 1-29 to any of the following library branches: Alpaugh, Dinuba, Earlimart, Exeter, Ivanhoe, Orosi, Pixley, Springville, Strathmore, Terra Bella, Three Rivers, Tipton, Visalia and Woodlake. Non-perishable food items will be accepted thankfully from anyone wishing to donate them, whether a fine is due or not.



Fix Your Space Update

Each employee who voluntarily provided feedback regarding their office spaces or breakrooms as part of the Fix Your Space contest will see some improvements.

In September, Tulare County launched the contest in hopes of improving working conditions.

Eight employees provided

feedback regarding their workspaces. Capital Projects & Facilities staff visited each site to evaluate what needed to be done.

According to staff, some of the repairs, cleaning, painting, roof repair, tile replacement, etc. will be handled by the County and other repairs will be conducted by the building

owner.

Some projects are underway and others will start in the coming months. Around Tulare County will feature a couple of the projects in upcoming editions.

Employee Spotlight: Team “No Contest”

The Office of the District Attorney threw, paddled, shot, kicked, searched, spiked and answered their way to first place in the Visalia Parks and Recreation’s 5th annual Corporate Games last month.

Dubbing themselves “No Contest”, the team of thirty six deputy district attorneys, investigators, paralegals, witness coordinators, prosecution assistants, administrative staff and assistant district attorneys displayed their athletic prowess and mental mettle over the Games’ two week competition. Twenty-six staff earned a medal, given to the 1st through 3rd place finishers in each event.

No Contest took gold in pickleball and ultimate Frisbee, silver in soccer, trivia, spelling bee and geocaching, and bronze in volleyball and horseshoes. Staff also fielded teams in kickball, three-point contest, bowling, ping pong, golf, innertube water polo, Texas hold ‘em, 3 on 3 basketball and Rock Band. In the final event, No Contest

took 4th place in tug-of-war to narrowly edge out Ben-e-lect by two points to claim the Corporate Cup.

The Office would like to challenge other departments to enter next year and compete against them as they vie to repeat in 2014.

The City of Visalia offers the Corporate Games as a way for local businesses and their employees to stay active in the community. In addition, the Corporate Games aims to promote wellness and recreational activities; encourage total company involvement by offering a competition through a variety of events; boost morale, teamwork, and company pride among employees; and facilitate company interaction through the competitive spirit.

Learn more about the Corporate Games by visiting:

<http://bit.ly/1di5SdU>



Pictured Above: Tulare County District Attorney Office staff who participated in Visalia’s Corporate Games



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: Croatian Exhibit

The History of Tulare County Farm Labor & Agriculture Museum debuted its latest exhibit on November 3. The exhibit’s name is *Diligence Grown from Strong Roots: Honoring Croatian Experiences in Tulare County*.

The museum has collaborated with members of the local Croatian community to create the display that tells the story of the influence that this community has had on Tulare County.

Photographs and artifacts

from local Croatian families aim to showcase the Croatian culture, which includes a wide variety of elements such as widespread participation in the table grape industry, musical instruments and strong family ties.

The exhibit opening program included: traditional music played by a live Tamburica band and brief talks by community members featured in the accompanying video produced by Tulare County Office of Education. Deli

meats, cheeses, and pastries, provided by A1 Imports of San Pedro and Biljana Koncevska, will be available for tasting during the event.

Please call 559/733-6616 for more information.

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

newsletter@co.tulare.ca.us



Flu Shots Available for County Residents

"Receiving a flu vaccine this fall season is one of the most important things that you can do for yourself and those around you to keep you healthy." County Health Officer, Dr. Karen Haught

Influenza is a respiratory infection that produces fever, chills, sore throat, muscle aches, and cough lasting a week or more and Tulare County residents are urged to get the flu vaccination.

"Receiving a flu vaccine this fall season is one of the most important things that you can do for yourself and those around you to keep you healthy," said County Health Officer Dr. Karen Haught. "There are several formulations of the vaccine available this year and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) does not recommend one over the other but recommends that everyone receive a vaccine."

Vaccination is the most effective means of preventing influenza. The vaccine also helps prevent you from spreading the flu to your family members, friends, and

co-workers. In the case of those at high risk for complicated influenza, vaccination could be lifesaving.

These groups are:

- Any person with a chronic medical condition that requires frequent medical attention. Examples include asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease, chronic liver disease and many others.
- Pregnant women
- Any person who will have contact with an infant less than 6 months of age during the influenza season
- Children under the age of five
- Adults 55 years and older

According to the CDC, each year about 36,000 Americans, mostly in these high risk groups, reportedly die from flu complications and flu is the 8th leading

cause of death in the United States. Vaccination is recommended for everyone over the age of six months.

Certain groups of persons are at high risk for complicated influenza and for them the vaccine is especially important.

Vaccination of health care providers is also encouraged as a means of preventing transmission of influenza from the provider to high risk patients. At this time, the vaccine is widely available in the community.

For monthly flu clinic schedules, please check www.tularehhsa.org under the Public Health tool bar and the TulareCountyHHSa Facebook social media page.

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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NOVEMBER COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

Meeting: (Date/Time)

More Information:

Board of Supervisors' Meeting: 9 a.m. Nov. 5; 7p.m. Nov. 12*	559/636-5000
Tulare County Association of Governments: 1 p.m., Nov. 18	559/624-7274
Tulare County Planning Commission: 9 a.m. Nov. 13	559/624-7000

***The November 12 Board of Supervisors meeting will start at 7 p.m. and take place at Porterville City Hall, located at 291 N. Main St. in Porterville.**



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.