



# Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY - DECEMBER 2011

## Chairman's Message: 2011 Was a Success



It has been an honor serving as your Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors in 2011. Tulare County's employees continued to bring cutting edge ideas forward while delivering important services to residents.

Some projects and events of note in 2011 include:

- CAO and County Counsel staff successfully led the process of the redistricting of Supervisorial district lines. That included assisting an 11-member advisory committee with public outreach and narrowing down three recommended maps to the Board of Supervisors. The Board did approve a new map which will provide new district boundaries for the next 10

years.

- Capital Projects staff managed the Parking Lot VI Construction Project, which added 166 extra parking spaces around the Tulare County Superior Courthouse in Visalia.

- Resource Management Agency staff managed to move the Road 80 Construction Project forward. Work on Road 80, between Avenue 384 and Avenue 416, will consist of widening the roadway from two lanes to four with turn lanes and a center median.

- Tulare County's Sheriff's Department and RMA partnered in April and May to shut down a portion of the Kings River in Tulare County to recreational use in an effort to protect the public. There were a limited number of incidents reported.

- The Tulare County Gang Prevention Task Force helped assist several communities in hosting Step Up anti-gang events. Most notable, three events in Alpaugh, Goshen,

and Porterville were held in May. The May event in Porterville prompted community leaders to continue to host Step Up events throughout the year.

- Workforce Investment Board staff helped provide training for long-term unemployed or previously laid-off workers for careers in renewable energy.

The listed projects and initiatives are a just a sample of the great work Tulare County's employees conduct on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis.

I want to publicly thank my fellow board members, the other elected officials, our CAO and his staff and the many hard working employees of Tulare County for their collective contributions to local government in 2011.

Mike Ennis, Chairman  
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

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## Libraries in Earlimart/Ivanhoe Reopen

Tulare County Branch Libraries in Ivanhoe and Earlimart hosted grand reopening events in November.

Both libraries were recently closed for renovations that were paid for by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) American Rehabilitation and Recovery Acts funds, Tulare County,

and Tulare County Library Foundation Funds. Each branch library received more than \$100,000 of updates including new library shelving, new furniture, and a general update of the facilities.

"The Board of Supervisors commends staff with the Tulare County Library, Resource Management Agency and Capital Projects

departments, who have been hard at work improving facilities for County residents," said Mike Ennis, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "The improvements to the libraries will prove to be a major benefit to both communities."



## Court of Appeal Rules in Favor of Tulare County

“The opinion by the 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeal affirms the position of the Board that no Brown Act violations have ever occurred.”  
Mike Ennis,  
Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

The California 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeal in Fresno issued its opinion November 2 regarding a lawsuit filed against the Tulare County Board of Supervisors alleging Brown Act Violations and upheld an August 2010 Tulare County Superior Court ruling to dismiss the case.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Mike Ennis issued the following statement:

"The opinion by the 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeal affirms the position of the Board that no Brown Act violations have ever occurred. The petitioners did not allege one fact that would support a lawsuit. The lawsuit was completely baseless and without any factual foundation."

Richard P. McKee, who passed away in April 2011, filed the lawsuit in March 2010 after reading a series of local news stories published by the Visalia

Times-Delta in 2009. The Visalia Times-Delta/Tulare Advance Register and the California Newspaper Publishers Association later joined as plaintiffs. The plaintiffs argued that the Board of Supervisors violated the Brown Act - California's open-meeting law - when eating meals together in numbers constituting a majority.

The Board of Supervisors maintain that they did not violate the opening meeting law by having lunch together because discussions had during those lunches were not within the scope of the Brown Act.

The plaintiffs tried repeatedly to bring litigation in the Superior Court. The Board challenged each petition they filed, contending the petitions did not allege facts that were sufficient to support a cause of action.

After the lawsuit's dismissal in Tulare County Superior Court, the plaintiffs appealed to the 5<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeal in September 2010.

"The plaintiffs assumed there was a violation of the Brown Act and then worked backward using speculation instead of facts in their lawsuit," said Kathleen Bales-Lange, Tulare County Counsel. "We have always contended there was no basis for a lawsuit and the Court of Appeal agreed."

The Visalia Times-Delta has asked the Court of Appeal to reconsider its ruling.



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## Tulare County Receives DUI Monitoring Grant

The Tulare County Probation Department has been awarded a new traffic safety grant for a year-long program aimed at preventing deaths and injuries resulting from driving under the influence (DUI).

The \$75,000 grant awarded by the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to Tulare County will aid in the County's ongoing effort to improve traffic safety and the quality of life. Special probation supervision measures will target the high-risk, felony and repeat DUI offenders in Tulare County. The Probation Department will also work with other local law enforcement agencies on

anti-DUI efforts as part of an on-going commitment to keep our roadways safe through both enforcement and education.

The grant will assist in efforts to deal with worst-of-the-worst, high risk DUI offenders that pose a risk to communities. Funded activities will include monitoring of treatment and DUI program participation, conducting office visits, warrant sweeps, unannounced home searches, and random alcohol/drug testing to confirm compliance with court-ordered terms of probation.

"The intent of the Tulare County DUI Probation Supervision Program is to respond quickly and aggressively to felony DUI offenders through the assignment of a full-time Probation Officer," said Janet Honadle, Tulare County Probation Chief. "Felony DUI is a serious offense and convicted offenders require close probation supervision to ensure compliance with the terms of their release and immediate consequences for violations, including re-arrest."

## Employee Spotlight: BOS Staff



Allison Pierce (left) Helen Herrera (right)

Two new Board Representatives were hired by the Tulare County Board of Supervisors in November. Board Representatives perform responsible, confidential, and complex support work for the Board of Supervisors.

“The Board of Supervisors can not be more pleased with the addition of Allison Pierce and Helen Herrera,” said Mike Ennis, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. “Both have exceptional professional backgrounds and are self-motivated, self-starters.”

### Allison Pierce:

Allison Pierce formerly served as Community Liaison for the Tulare County Department of Child Support for four years prior to accepting the position with the Board.

Allison will be the lead staff for the Tulare County Gang Prevention Task Force, Tulare County Youth Commission, and Summer Night Lights Program. In addition, Allison’s duties also include constituent casework, writing and coordinating agenda items, and scheduling.

“I am honored to serve as a Board Representative for members of the Board of Supervisors as well as the residents of Tulare County,” Pierce said.

Allison earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Communications from California State University, Sonoma and is currently pursuing a Masters in Public Administration from CSU, Fresno. She is expected to graduate in May.

### Helen Herrera:

Helen Herrera holds a Masters Degree in Latin American Studies from CSU, San Diego and maintains more than 17 years of professional experience in public relations, government affairs, and community development.

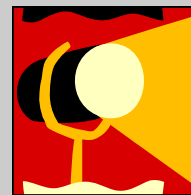
Helen’s duties will focus on community outreach, public

information officer assignments, staff for the Tulare County Indian Gaming Local Community Benefit Committee, and special projects such as managing the Tulare County Speaker’s Bureau.

“Joining the Tulare County Board of Supervisors presents the ideal opportunity to continue focusing on government affairs while making a positive impact with the local community,” Herrera said. “I am excited about working for the community and representing the Board.”

Helen also maintains a background in grassroots campaigning, land use negotiations, environmental justice, sustainable development, Hispanic media marketing, along with public participation practices.

As Helen is new to Tulare County, she will be attending community meetings and exploring the area. If you happen to run into her, she will be happy to say hello and introduce herself.



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: Animal Shelter

The Tulare County Animal Control Shelter was opened in July 2001 in an effort to provide animal control services to the unincorporated areas of Tulare County. The Animal Shelter responds to field emergencies including dog bites, vicious animals, animal neglect, law enforcement requests and public complaints.

The Animal Shelter focuses on good adoptions and makes

every effort to ensure the dog or cat and it’s new family are a good match.

Stop by the Animal Shelter, 14131 Avenue 256 in Visalia, to take a look at the animals. If you don’t have time to stop by, please visit the Animal Shelter’s web site at <http://lostpets.tularehhsa.org> and click on

“Available Animals.”

If you would like to adopt an

animal, please contact Animal Control for more information at 559/636-DOGS (3647).

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

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

## Tulare County Pays Tribute to Museum Donors

In November, Tulare County History of Farm Labor & Agriculture Museum officials recognized Southern California Edison and the Tulare County Office of Education for providing more than \$200,000 of in-kind and financial donations. All donations made were used towards creating and providing programming for the museum's Learning Center.

An event to recognize the two donors was held at the Ag Museum at Mooney Grove Park in Visalia. During the event, a fixture honoring the donors was unveiled above the doors at the museum's Learning Center. Students from local schools also viewed a newly created video featuring the history of the Yokuts Tribe.

"The success of the Ag Museum is not possible without the generous in-kind and monetary support of Southern California Edison, the Tulare County Office of Education and many other community donors," said Mike Ennis, Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors. "Tulare County is proud to recognize these two donors by having a permanent fixture placed in the museum."

Currently, the museum's Learning Center hosts thousands of students each year who are studying local history. For each new exhibition, the Tulare County Office of Education's Impact Center staff creates videos for students to view in the Learning Center. These films bring to life the stories of the ethnic groups featured in the exhibition, while addressing California State Content Standards for History/Social

Science.

"We are proud to be a partner in the History of Farm Labor & Agriculture Museum," said Jim Vidak, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools. "The exhibitions and videos provide students with a rich perspective on the immigrant and native groups that made Tulare County one of the world's foremost agricultural producers."

Students from Stone Corral Elementary School and Sundale Union School will attend Monday's event and have the first view of a new video that provides information on the Yokuts Tribe. In addition, Southern California Edison will showcase "Electrification of Tulare County," an exhibit which tells the story of the company's 125 years of serving Tulare County.

"There is no more meaningful

way for Edison International to celebrate 125 years of history than to be counted as a partner with the Tulare County Office of Education in the mission of this museum and learning center," said Bill DeLain, Southern California Edison Region Manager.



Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak gave comments about TCOE's contributions to the Learning Center.

### 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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### DECEMBER COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

#### Meeting: (Date/Time)

Tulare County Association of Governments: Dec. 5. 1 p.m.  
Board of Supervisors' Meeting: Dec. 6, 13. 9 a.m.  
Tulare County Planning Commission: Dec. 7, 21. 9 a.m.  
L.A.F.C.O. Meeting: Dec. 7. 2 p.m.  
Tulare County Water Commission: N/A  
Tulare County Youth Commission Meeting: Dec. 12. 3 p.m.

#### More Information:

559/624-7274  
559/636-5000  
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559/636-5005  
559/636-5000



**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](http://www.tularecountymap.com).