



# Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY – FEBRUARY 2014

## Chairman's Message: County In Good Shape



*Editor's Note: Below is an excerpt from the State of the County, delivered by Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Phil Cox on Jan. 28, 2014. To see the full speech, please visit [aroundtularecounty.com](http://aroundtularecounty.com)*

In preparing for this speech during the last two months I found myself looking for the news. I read and reread the message I delivered five years ago and could not find anything from that speech that compares to this time. There is good news and bad to share for the upcoming year, but mostly good. First I want to thank my family for their continuing support they give to me and especially my wife Connie. In just a few months it will be five years since she discovered she had cancer. Our family surrounded us with support and love to help her through the treatment. The community offered its support also. We will always remember those who showed their support through kind notes and prayers. Here we are today at the five year mark and cancer free.

It is a pleasure working with four Supervisors who have the best interest of this county in mind. Each of them is sincere in their commitment to their districts and their

conviction to serve the citizens of this county.

I asked our CAO to provide me with a spread sheet showing the change in leadership that has taken place over the past few years. Since 2004 all department heads with the exception of two have changed. We created two new departments just last year alone. Our fire and IT departments are also still relatively young.

I asked each department head to provide a list of accomplishments from last year and also to give me a goal for 2014. I would like to highlight a few of the responses I received. In 2013 the Sherriff's Department worked what seemed like non-stop hand in hand with our code enforcement and County Counsel to hammer illegal marijuana grows. Our hat goes off to them on their tireless effort. Their goal for this year is not hard to figure out. They have applied for and received grant funding to build a new jail in Porterville and a jail with re-entry training classrooms at Sequoia Field. This represents \$110,000,000 in construction projects that will add almost five hundred beds of capacity and allow our Sheriff to improve operations in the south county.

Our Fire Department replaced its entire inventory of breathing apparatus improving the safety of our fire fighters. They continue to

work with the Sheriff to collocate dispatch services. This will allow the county to realize cost savings with both dispatch centers in one location.

Our Resource Management Agency processed \$79 million in solar projects last year. They completed several major road projects and this year are working on several bridge projects. We may not see those bridge projects under construction this year, but much of the preliminary work will be completed. There are several key employees who worked on the road projects, too many to list.

The Health and Human Service Agency partnered with our local hospitals and health care providers last year to implement the Low Income Health Program, (LIHP). Thousands of Tulare County citizens have benefited because of their hard work. They moved into a newly remodeled building on Tulare Ave. here in Visalia serving our mental health and drug and alcohol programs. This board cares about our employees and the conditions they work in. As we approach this year this same team is working around the clock to enroll all eligible residents into the Affordable Care Act program.

TO SEE THE FULL SPEECH, PLEASE VISIT:

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

### Inside this issue:

SUPERVISOR'S MESSAGE	<b>1</b>
BUILDING PERMITS SURGE IN TULARE COUNTY	<b>2</b>
URBAN ART ON DISPLAY IN COUNTY	<b>2</b>
SPOTLIGHT: MARILYN KINOSHITA	<b>3</b>
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: INDIGENT BURIAL	<b>3</b>
COUNTY PROCLAIMS LOCAL EMERGENCY	<b>4</b>
COUNTY DATES FOR EVENTS, ACTIVITIES	<b>4</b>

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## Building Permits Surge in Tulare County

“The value of county building permits issued in 2013 increased by \$40 million over the value of permits issued during 2012. This is one sign the economy is improving in the area.”  
Board of Supervisors  
Chairman Phil Cox

Tulare County officials say the number of building permits for both single family homes and commercial buildings increased sharply in 2013. County records show 3,363 building permits were issued in 2013 – up sharply from the 3,023 issued in 2012.

“The value of county building permits issued in 2013 increased by \$40 million over the value of permits issued during 2012,” said Phil Cox, Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors. “This is one sign the economy is improving in the area.”

Officials say the value of all building permits issued in 2013 increased approximately 32 % - to an estimated overall valuation of \$166.3 million. Permits issued for houses increased by 23% while commercial building permits increased by 20%.

What’s changed? Two years ago the Board of Supervisors

established an in house economic development program to foster value growth. Challenged to make the county easier to do business with, planning administrators developed a team-based approach toward business development. For example, if someone wanted to fast-track construction of a medical clinic, or expand a large ag processing facility on an aggressive timeline, the county developed a “new” team-based process to accommodate that developer’s needs.

“We have streamlined the process to improve service to our customers,” said Mike Spata, Associate Director of the Tulare County Resource Management Agency.

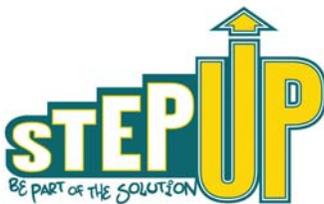
The planning team works with the business owner or project applicant to determine several important details, such as project timeline and how much should the process cost?

“Then we can have the real conversation – how fast the business owner wants to move forward,” Spata said.

Officials say the increase in business activity and total number of projects permitted during the last two years indicates that in addition to signs the overall economy is finally improving, the County’s new economic development approach appears to be working nicely. In 2013 alone: Setton Farms pulled more than \$2 million-worth of permits for plant expansions; Paramount Citrus expanded greenhouse facilities - \$2 million in permits; Family Health Care Network’s new rural medical clinic in Terra Bella - \$750,000 permit value; Ventura Coastal \$1.6 million – installation of new silos to store citrus juice in Tipton.

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## Urban Art to Be Displayed at County Buildings



Three pieces of urban art, inspired by Pro Youth HEART, will be showcased at eleven Tulare County locations through April 2.

In February, the art will be on display at the Exter, Lindsay, Strathmore, and Porterville libraries. Other stops include libraries in Earlimart, Pixley, and Tulare. The last showing of the art will be at Tulare County Government Plaza located at 5961 South Mooney Blvd in Visalia from March 26 through April 2. This marks the third year urban art will be displayed throughout the county.

Tulare County acquired the urban art through the September 2013 Taste the Arts event held by the Visalia Arts Consortium and sponsored by the Step Up Gang Task Force. Three artists from throughout California were invited to create the paintings inspired by the mission of Pro Youth HEART, which cherishes the belief that giving children hope reduces youth violence and saves lives. HEART strives to give opportunities to youth to develop strong decision making skills and have a safe place to be during after school hours.

At the conclusion of the tour the artwork will be donated to the Pro Youth HEART after-school program. For more information, visit [www.stepuptc.com](http://www.stepuptc.com)

## Employee Spotlight: Marilyn Kinoshita



In January, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors reappointed Marilyn Kinoshita to an additional four-year term as Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer. This will be Kinoshita's second four-year term. Kinoshita was first appointed to the Ag Commissioner position in December 2009.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Phil Cox said Kinoshita's proven track record as Ag Commissioner was the deciding factor in the reappointment. In her first four years, Kinoshita has led the department in improving technology to enhance operations, bolstered

community outreach and education, and focused on specialized training for staff.

"The farming community is pleased with the job Marilyn is doing, as is the Board of Supervisors," Chairman Cox said. "We look forward to Marilyn's leadership for another four years."

Kinoshita said she is pleased to serve as Ag Commissioner for an additional four years.

"We have a few exciting projects in the works which will help streamline daily activities for our staff. Growers can also rely on up-to-date information from our website," Kinoshita said. "I plan to continue volunteering to speak to any local group who wants to learn more about how crops are grown in Tulare County and my department's roll in the process of sending products worldwide."

Kinoshita joined the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's department as an inspector in 1993, and has since worked in most of the divisions within the department. She began her Tulare County career working in pesticide use enforcement, and then served as a standards and quarantine inspector before becoming the department's Dinuba District Inspector in 1999.

Kinoshita was promoted to Deputy Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures in February 2004, a position responsible for the direct supervision of 29 ag inspectors and 16 agricultural aides. Kinoshita was promoted again in October 2009 to the position of Assistant Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer, the second highest ranked position in the department.



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: Indigent Burial Program

Family members or next of kin are encouraged to claim their deceased loved ones prior to an interment scheduled for March 28, 2014 at the Tulare County Potter's Field, just north of Traver.

Kingsburg Cemetery District Superintendent Carmen Rojas said more than 210 indigent cremains are being held at the Kingsburg Cemetery, located at 12782 E. Clarkson Ave. Kingsburg, CA 93631. The last day to claim the cremains is March 25. If the cremains aren't claimed, they will be interred, with a ceremony to follow at 10 a.m. on March 28 at Potter's Field. A potter's field is a term for a place for the burial of unknown or indigent people.

The cremains are being held by the Kingsburg Cemetery District as part of Tulare County's Indigent Burial Program.

When a Tulare County resident passes away and there are no funds for his or her burial, the County of Tulare may be able to help. The Indigent Burial Policy states that the County may provide for the cremation/burial of such persons and may provide for the maintenance of their graves.

To receive these County services, the person's entire household must earn less than the federal poverty level. Applications for this service are available in English and

Spanish from the Health & Human Service Agency, the TulareWORKs offices, all funeral homes, the Coroner's Office, and Veterans Services offices.

Family members or next of kin are encouraged to visit <http://tchhsa.org/hhsa/index.cfm/benefits/burial-program/potters-field-burial-records/> to view a list of indigent cremains being held by the Kingsburg Cemetery District. If a person is identified, family members or next of kin should contact Kingsburg Cemetery District Superintendent Carmen Rojas at 559/897-2426.

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 Proclaims Local Emergency

### In Home Water Saving Tips:

Use the washing machine for full loads only to save water and energy.

Run the dishwasher only when full to save water and energy.

When washing hands, don't let the water run.

Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator.

Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the fridge instead of running tap water.

If you accidentally drop ice cubes, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.

Collect the water you use while rinsing fruit and vegetables. Use it to water plant.

On Feb. 4, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors unanimously proclaimed a local emergency due to the statewide drought, called for state legislators to place a water bond on a future ballot, and formed an ad hoc committee to address future water advocacy strategy.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Phil Cox said the proclamation of local emergency enables Tulare County to recover any future drought response costs and also makes the County eligible for any other drought-related assistance in the future.

"This is a very serious issue that can potentially destroy our local economy," Chairman Cox said. "The Board would like to encourage everybody to step up and conserve as much water as you can."

The Board's vote today follows the January 17

decision by the State of California to proclaim a State of Emergency, which provides a variety of avenues by which State agencies can expedite assistance to those impacted by the drought.

Prior to the vote, Supervisor Allen Ishida urged state legislators to place a water bond on a future ballot and include funding for water storage.

"If you want to pass something, you pass it during a crisis," Supervisor Ishida commented during the meeting. "This is the ideal time to pass a meaningful water bond measure because this water issue affects everybody in the state of California."

Supervisor Ishida, a citrus farmer in east Tulare County, said more water storage will help the agriculture industry by preserving water and

jobs.

"This drought is going to have a huge impact on the economy for future years," Supervisor Ishida said. "Forty percent of our crops are exported and sent to the ports in Long Beach and in Oakland. This drought will also have an impact on a lot of jobs in the urban areas of the state."

At the conclusion of the Board of Supervisors meeting, Chairman Cox announced Supervisor Ishida and Supervisor Steve Worthley will participate in an ad hoc committee to discuss future water advocacy strategy at the state level. The ad hoc committee will provide recommendations to the Board at future meetings.

### 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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### JANUARY COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

#### Meeting: (Date/Time)

Board of Supervisors' Meeting: 9 a.m. Feb. 4, 25.  
World Ag Expo. Feb. 11-13.  
Tulare County Association of Governments: 1 p.m., Feb. 17.  
Tulare County Planning Commission: 9 a.m. Feb. 5, 19.

#### More Information:

559/636-5000  
559/688-1030  
559/624-7274  
559/624-7000



**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).