



Around Tulare County

Delivering Information about Tulare County - January 2010

Chairman's Message: County Strived to Improve in 2009



It has been an honor serving as the Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors in 2009. Last year was filled with challenging decisions, landmark occasions, and hard work as Tulare County continued to make great strides in improving the quality of life for its residents.

As Chairman, it has been a pleasure working with a Board who is proactive and works diligently to protect the health and welfare of Tulare County's residents. For example:

- Supervisor Allen Ishida is the Board's water expert and is making great strides on improving the quality and quantity of water through the Tulare County Water Commission.

- Supervisor Pete Vander Poel has been working on an agricultural-tourism program that will bring additional visitors to Tulare County.

- Supervisor Steve Worthley continues to represent Tulare County on the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and is working to improve our air quality

without damaging business.

- Supervisor Mike Ennis has been actively involved in the efforts to protect the short-haul rail along the east side of our County and to secure funding for the Lake Success Enlargement Project.

- I continue to participate in the Tulare County Gang Prevention Task Force and work to find safe and healthy alternatives to the gang lifestyle for our youth. Strides to combat gangs and gang influences were made through several grant programs that funded youth activities and high school service learning programs. Educational summits that reached thousands of residents were also held.

As a Board, we, like all local government jurisdictions, had to address a declining economy. While tough decisions were made, Tulare County employees should be commended for continuing to provide an excellent level of public service. For example, two county departments highlighted in this edition earned statewide recognition for programs they provide.

There were also many noteworthy occasions in Tulare County last year. We celebrated two events at Mooney Grove Park in Visalia. In October, a community celebration attended by thousands marked the 100-year anniversary of Mooney

Grove Park. In November, the History of Farm Labor and Agriculture Museum was dedicated and later opened to the public. The new museum features exhibits showcasing the cultural heritage of the people who farmed the Valley. The new museum is the product of a great partnership between Tulare County, Tulare County Office of Education, Southern California Edison, and the Tulare County Historical Society.

The City of Visalia was selected as a stage start for the Amgen Tour of California. Thousands of people lined downtown Visalia and the race route throughout Tulare County to encourage the riders. We are excited that the City of Visalia has been selected again as a host city for a stage start in May 2010.

I consider myself blessed to be able to work with the dedicated employees of this County. Your commitment to service, quality work and the compassion with which you serve the public is what makes this county such a great organization to belong to.

Phil Cox, Chairman
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

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Do you have an idea for a feature in the Around Tulare County newsletter? We would appreciate your feedback. Please let us know at newsletter@co.tulare.ca.us

Around Tulare County

Two County Departments Receive Accolades



Front pictured from left to right: Stacey Jared, Gloria Guzman, Barbara Gross. Back: District Four Supervisor Steve Worthley

Noteworthy:

This marks the third consecutive year a program within the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency program has received recognition from CSAC.

Two Tulare County departments received recognition from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Challenge Awards Competition.

The CSAC Challenge Awards recognizes the innovative and creative spirit of California county governments as they find new and effective ways of providing programs and services to their citizens.

HHS – Baby Steps to Parenting

Baby Steps to Parenting, a program administered by the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency's Child Welfare Services, was recognized as a recipient of a 2009 CSAC Challenge Awards Competition Merit Award.

Baby Steps to Parenting is a 10-week prevention program developed for mothers of drug-exposed infants. The program, a collaboration among Child Welfare Services, Central Valley Regional Center, and the Tulare County Office of Education, addresses the needs of mothers, including

support for depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, etc., and those of the drug exposed infants.

Central to the program is the concept of "bundling" services such as group therapy, nutrition/exercise classes, and infant massage classes. The pilot group was funded through in-kind contributions; the program is a long-term investment with potential savings coming from families not re-entering the child welfare services system. Pilot participants particularly appreciated that it did not focus on past drug use and included both times of listening and reflection.

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County Counsel - Legal Officer Manual for Emergency Response

Tulare County Counsel received a 2009 Challenge Awards Honorable Mention by developing a legal

manual that consolidates authorities, templates, and advice for County Counsel to quickly refer to during emergencies.

Previously, legal authorities/manuals were unwieldy, voluminous and decentralized. This comprehensive manual addresses issues alphabetically, includes citations to legal authorities and can be accessed electronically or physically.

Funded by a grant from Homeland Security, this manual was originally developed in response to Sept. 11; it has since been expanded to include pandemic health threats, bioterrorism, and natural disasters. The manual enables any deputy in the County Counsel office to provide legal advice when standing shift as a legal officer. Developers believe that costs of the creation of the manual are offset by the savings realized in response time to emergency situations.

The Board of Supervisors recognized both programs at its December 8 meeting.

New Ag Commissioner/Sealer Selected



Marilyn Kinoshita

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors announced December 17, 2009 they have selected Marilyn Kinoshita to serve as the next Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer.

"Marilyn Kinoshita brings tremendous experience, personal integrity and a dynamic energy to this position," said Board Chairman Phil Cox.

After a statewide search, Kinoshita was chosen from a final candidate pool that had to meet specific state criteria and qualifications. Kinoshita joined the Tulare County Ag 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.

Kinoshita was promoted to Deputy Ag Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures in 2004. She was promoted again in October 2009 to the position of Assistant Ag Commissioner/Sealer, the second highest ranked position in the department.

Employee Spotlight: Darla Rambonga



Name: Darla Rambonga

Title: Probation Department Office Assistant

Years of Service: 2

Duties: Receptionist

Family: Married to husband Paul. Son Manuel, 19. Daughters Lisa, 19, Paula, 17, and grandson Spencer, 6. Two sons who have gone home to be with the Lord.

Hobbies: Reading, crocheting, and helping others.

Clubs/Organizations: Mothers

ers Against Drunk Driving, Compassionate Friends, Future Farmers of America, American Cancer Society, Relay for Life, Church.

What is your most rewarding experience as a County employee? Helping parents feel more comfortable when they are in a situation that has removed all control and placed fear and anxiety in their immediate future.

Please tell us something other employees might not know about you?

I became an active member of MADD following my son being killed by a drunk driver in 2001 and I served as President of the Chapter for 2 years. My duties included participating in press conferences, doing news interviews following tragic drunk driving crashes and presentations to

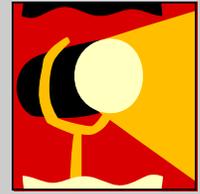
schools and colleges on impaired driving.

In 2005 following the death of my oldest son due to cancer, I became captain of a Relay for Life team in his memory and have been honored by the participation of young people helping our team annually.

I am a Mary Kay consultant and have been blessed to be able to help Seniors in Nursing Homes by initiating a program for my team called Adopt a Grandparent that will provide gifts this holiday season.

Where is your favorite place to visit in Tulare County?

The Sequoias where I was able to spend time with my older sons taking hikes with them and enjoying the majestic views that are so close for us.



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

Sheriff's Volunteer Honored for Thousands of Hours of Service



Gwen McLaughlin, a Tulare County Sheriff's Department volunteer, was honored by the Board of Supervisors and Sheriff Bill Wittman for dedicating more than 25,000 hours of service.

McLaughlin has volunteered the equivalent of 12 years of full-time work in just more

than 11 years of service. As a Volunteer in Patrol (VIP), Gwen patrols with a partner in the unincorporated areas of Tulare County and reports suspicious activity, assists stranded motorists, assists with crime prevention, and makes her patrol vehicle visible.

Gwen regularly helps shuttle vehicles for maintenance from outlying stations to Motor Pool and delivers interoffice mail to various County departments.

Beyond her time assisting the Patrol Division, Gwen volunteers in the Records office by conducting quality control checks on arrest warrant information, files arrest warrants and fingerprint cards, and hand carries documents to the Visalia Courthouse on a daily basis.

"Gwen possesses a work ethic that all should aspire to," Sheriff Wittman said.

Web Extra

Sheriff Bill Wittman presented a pin to Gwen to commemorate her thousands of volunteer hours.

To watch a video of Sheriff Wittman presenting the pin to Gwen, please copy and paste the link below into your web browser.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siOLqjwR8Ew>

In future editions, Around Tulare County will post more videos of interest.

Board of Supervisors Deliver Computers to Youth

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors; Tulare County Office of Education; four Visalia Rotary clubs; College of the Sequoias Computer Club and Office Depot partnered together to deliver more than 100 computers to worthy students on December 10.

"We want our kids in Tulare County to have the technology they need to be successful in school," Board Chairman Phil Cox said.

Tulare County sold 100 surplus computers and monitors to Visalia's four Rotary clubs at \$5 each so they could be distributed free to worthy children selected by school officials.

Rotary Club of Visalia President Brian Hyde said Rotarians were delighted to help financially support the program, and called their participation an investment in the

future growth of the children selected to receive computers.

Tulare County Superintendent Jim Vidak worked with local superintendents and principals at rural schools to identify students who would benefit academically by having a computer at home.

"We appreciate the Board of Supervisors making these machines available to support the studies of 100 very deserving students," Superintendent Vidak said. "This gift not only benefits the recipient, but also his or her siblings and parents if this is the first computer in the home."

Previously used in county offices, the Pentium 4 computers are loaded with new software. Student members of the College of the Sequoias computer club tested the computers and erased all

sensitive and proprietary software on the hard drives. Volunteers from Office Depot are also assisting with the computer deliveries to rural schools.

"Rotary is all about giving back to the community," said Scott Jacobsen, a regional sales manager for Office

Depot and Rotary member who coordinated the donation on behalf of the Visalia Rotary Foundation. County staff, Rotarians and other volunteers met at the Tulare County Surplus Store in the morning to load up vehicles with computers and delivered the computers.



District Two Supervisor Pete Vander Poel delivered computers to Tulare schools as part of the annual holiday program.

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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JANUARY COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

Meeting: (Date/Time)

Lien Date for All Property: Jan. 1
Step Up Youth Summit Planning Meeting: Jan. 8, 3:30 p.m.
Board of Supervisors' Meeting: Jan. 12, 26. 9 a.m.
Tulare County Planning Commission: Jan. 13, 27. 9 a.m.
L.A.F.C.O. Meeting: Jan. 13. 2 p.m.
Tulare County Youth Commission: Jan. 19. 3 p.m.
T.C.A.G. Meeting: Jan. 25. 1 p.m.
Tulare County Water Commission: Jan. 25. 4 p.m.

More Information:

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For more information, visit: www.co.tulare.ca.us and click on "County Calendar"



Places to Go Play: The 150-acre Mooney Grove Park is home to one of the largest native stands of Valley Oaks in California. The park also includes a lake, playground areas, two 18-hole championship level disc golf courses, a historic Boy Scouts log cabin, 18 large covered picnic arbors, and the recently opened Tulare County History of Farm Labor & Agriculture Museum. Learn more about Mooney Grove Park and other places in Tulare County to "Go Play" at www.tularecountymap.com.