



# Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY – JULY 2012

## Supervisor's Message: Customer Service Training Begins



Continuing to provide excellent customer service and developing outreach programs for the public were two topics that I wanted to focus on during my term as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors last year.

I'm pleased to report that these items, with the help of County staff, continue to move forward with success.

### Customer Service

Residents who interact with Tulare County government employees can expect an even greater level of customer service in the future thanks to a new program developed by County staff.

The County Customer Service Training Program aims to provide customer service training to all County employees through lectures, videos, and interactive sessions. More than 4,000 Tulare County employees will participate in the program over the next two years. Each new hire will be required to take the training.

Prior to developing the program, an outside consultant conducted an evaluation of Tulare County's ability to provide quality customer service. The evaluation, which included internal surveys and mystery shoppers, showed that, overall, employees were providing good customer service.

Day-in and day-out our employees strive to satisfy and meet the public's needs. This program will ensure that we will maintain and elevate our level of customer service.

As I mentioned in the 2011 State of the County, customer service is the lifeblood of any successful business, including local government. Thousands of residents utilize Tulare County services every day. These residents expect and deserve great customer service.

### Speakers Bureau

Launched in June 2011, the Tulare County Speakers Bureau is designed to provide public speakers for any event. Presentations on anything from the budgeting process to road maintenance are made available and can be of interest to local clubs, civic groups, neighborhood associations, community organizations and schools. Presentations are provided

by some the most talented, sharp people in this County - our employees.

I'm pleased to report that through May 2012, County employees have made presentations at 34 meetings that were attended by more than 1,500 people.

While we have had some success with the Speakers Bureau, there is always room for improvement.

County staff is currently working on fine tuning the more than 200 topics that are offered. A presentation to the Board of Supervisors will be made in July to honor those County employees who have dedicated their time to addressing topics at the public's request.

To request a speaker, please visit [www.aroundtularecounty.com](http://www.aroundtularecounty.com) and click on Speakers Bureau to fill out the Speakers Bureau Reservation Form and select a topic. If you do not have access to a computer, please give Board Representative Tammie Weyker a call at 559/636-5000.

Mike Ennis, District Five  
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

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“Tulare County will not tolerate illegal medical marijuana operations in our unincorporated areas.” Board of Supervisors Chairman Allen Ishida.

## Cutler Marijuana Collective Eradicates Crop

A Cutler-based medical marijuana collective was forced to eradicate its crop in June after a Tulare County Superior Court judge issued a temporary restraining order.

On June 12, Superior Court Judge Paul Vortmann granted the County's application for a Temporary Restraining Order requiring the property owner and certain individuals growing marijuana collectively to comply with the County Ordinance Code. Three people were associating together to grow marijuana outside at a property located in an agricultural zone in Cutler. The property was surrounded by an eight-foot fence, also a violation of the ordinance code.

The Ordinance Code prohibits

collectives or cooperatives from cultivating or distributing marijuana in an agricultural zone. Medical Marijuana Collectives or Cooperatives may only be located in commercial or manufacturing zones. No persons or people associating together may grow marijuana out of doors anywhere within the County. This case involved violations of both requirements.

By June 13, the marijuana had been removed from the property and the violations abated.

County Code Compliance works closely with the Sheriff's Department to identify grow sites which violate the Ordinance Code and which are appropriate for civil enforcement.

Any questions regarding the establishment or operation of a medical marijuana collective or cooperative, or cultivation or possession of medical marijuana should be directed to the Resource Management Agency Code Compliance Officer Mike Grove at 559/624-7002.

“Tulare County will not tolerate illegal medical marijuana operations in our unincorporated areas,” said Allen Ishida, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. “We will continue to take the appropriate actions to combat illegal medical marijuana operations.”

## WIC Opens New Location in Visalia



District 3 Supervisor Phil Cox (left) and District 4 Supervisor Steve Worthley (right) attended the grand opening.

A clinic designed to offer services to Tulare County's pregnant women, new mothers, and young children has moved to a more convenient location in north Visalia.

Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) officials hosted a grand opening in June of the new WIC Clinic, located at 1819 N. Dinuba Blvd. The clinic is next door to HHSA's Visalia District Office.

The WIC program is a nutrition program that helps pregnant women, new mothers and young children to eat well and stay healthy. The WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program is for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and post-partum women

and children under age five who have a nutritional risk.

"This new WIC Clinic location represents the County's continuing mission to improve our public services and make them more accessible," said District Two Supervisor Pete Vander Poel.

District Three Supervisor Phil Cox said the location was primarily chosen to better accommodate the needs of the clients.

"There are nine WIC locations in Tulare County total, and we've received a warm welcome from the community as this new location of our Visalia clinic will be capable of serving a greater number of clients," Supervisor Cox said. "The clinic is close to mass transit and it contributes

to the city's continued revitalization of north Visalia."

Providing a new location and improving services for WIC clients, the Visalia WIC Clinic features approximately 8,000 of square footage, and provides a confidential environment for clients and staff members.



HHSA's Director Dr. Cheryl Duerksen helped cut the ribbon at the new facility.

## Employee Spotlight: Barbara Gross

**Name:** Barbara Gross

**Title:** RN

**Years of Service:** 12

**Duties:** Case management for pregnant or new mothers who are experiencing symptoms of Perinatal Mood & Anxiety Disorders - what most people call postpartum depression. This includes instruction in practical ways to care for themselves and their babies through this period and referral for counseling/supportive agencies as needed. Since mothers are the heart of a family, strengthening even one mother, strengthens one family, which then strengthens our entire community.

**Family?** Husband Charles Gross, retired teacher. Daughter and son-in-law Sara and Mike Genter, grand daughter Bailey who live in Visalia. Step son and daughter-in-law Jon and Kwang La-Ongmani, granddaughter Khloe in Fairfax Virginia.

**Hobbies?** Painting/drawing

and playing with grandkids.

**Most rewarding experience as a County employee?**

My first job as a County employee was as an RN in Child Welfare Services. The most rewarding part of that program was working with mothers of drug exposed infants, in a pilot study with CVRC and Bright Start, as well as CWS RNs and Clinical Social workers. This focused on healing, loving, and bonding. The last that I heard, none of these mothers had re-entered the Child Welfare system after completing the program!

**Please tell us something other employees might not know about you?** Although I always identify my ethnicity as "Okie", I was actually born in Texas - listen closely and you will hear me say "idn't" instead of "isn't."


**Where is your favorite place to visit in Tulare County?**

Believe it or not - the twisty road between Woodlake and Orosi - I always see

something that makes me stop by the road and just enjoy the moment!

**You were recently selected as CSET's Volunteer of the Year. Please tell us what that meant to you.**

The Earlimart CSET staff had already started a youth group for city beautification projects when I met with them. I told them that I enjoyed painting with kids of all ages and would love to help with their murals. I had done a couple of murals with school children in Tipton and Earlimart several years ago. The first two we did were a baseball theme, and a profile of Cesar Chavez. It was a joy to work with the teens doing this and to see their creativity and enthusiasm. Over Easter week, we painted a kids' room at the Earlimart Family Resource Center - all Dora the Explorer. I am hoping that our next one will be an Aztec calendar - a great lesson in Mexican heritage and always colorful and fun looking!



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: Japanese Exhibit Opens at Museum

Tulare County's History of Farm Labor & Agriculture Museum is featuring a new exhibit: "Perseverance in Strength – Japanese Experiences in Tulare County."

"Like all immigrants who came to the San Joaquin Valley to farm and earn a decent living, the Japanese played a significant role in agriculture," said Allen Ishida, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "I encourage all members of the public to come to the museum and take

a look at the exhibit.

The exhibit includes photos and artifacts of the local Japanese community that will bring awareness to the culture during the past century, documenting initial migration, early farming, World War II and through the present. The exhibit will be on display through December 2012.

For more information, please call: Museum Curator Amy King at 559/733-6616.



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

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



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## New Location for County Probation Department



Tulare County Probation Department Janet Honadle cuts the ceremonial ribbon at function in June.

A portion of Tulare County's Probation Department recently moved into a renovated facility in downtown Visalia.

The move was needed to relieve crowded workspace at Probation's Fairway Office and to prepare for the hiring of more employees as a result of Assembly Bill 109.

In 2011, the state passed AB 109, the Criminal Justice Realignment Act, which shifted responsibility of more than 450 state offenders to the County. The County's plan is to efficiently use jail capacity, improve and streamline felony settlement, offer alternative custody options when appropriate and use evidence-based supervision and intervention services for these offenders.

In order to meet the staffing needs for the influx of state

offenders, Tulare County approved the allocation of 19 additional Probation employees. The additional employees were paid out of AB 109 funds provided to Tulare County. In the next two fiscal years, the Probation Department will also add more employees under AB 109 because of a projected increase of offenders who need supervision.

The 12,000 square foot building was built in 1975 and occupied by the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA). When HHSA moved out of the building 2009, the County sought to move Probation Department employees into the building. Flash forward, the \$2.2 million renovation project was complete in February 2012.

Some of the features of the

new building include:

- Sound-dampened interview rooms. These rooms will be utilized by Probation officers to conduct assessment and interviews with Post Release Community Supervision offenders who have been released from State Prison.
- Video surveillance equipment.
- New heating and ventilation system.
- Newly paved parking lot.

An open house and ribbon cutting ceremony was held in June.

### 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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### JULY COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

#### Meeting: (Date/Time)

#### More Information:

Board of Supervisors' Meeting: July 10, 24, 31. 9 a.m.	559/636-5000
L.A.F.C.O. Meeting: July 11. 2 p.m.	559/624-7274
Tulare County Water Commission: July 11. 3 p.m.	559/636-5005
Tulare County Planning Commission: July 11, 25. 9 a.m.	559/624-7000
Tulare County Youth Commission Meeting: July 16. 3 p.m.	559/636-5000
Tulare County Association of Governments: July 16. 1 p.m.	559/624-7274



**Places to Go Play:** Bartlett Park is located 8 miles east of Porterville, off Highway 190 on Worth Drive. The 130-acre Tulare County park was established in 1972 to replace a former park which was inundated when the nearby dam was built and Lake Success was created. The park is home to a large pond that affords fishing and attracts much wildlife activity. Learn more about Bartlett Park and other places to "Go Play" at [www.tularecountymap.com](http://www.tularecountymap.com).