



# Around Tulare County

DELIVERING INFORMATION ABOUT TULARE COUNTY

MAY 2016

## Supervisor's Message: Lots of Excitement Happening in District Five



It's been an exciting month to be the Supervisor representing District Five, a lot is happening in the south county.

One memorable event in particular for me was the dedication of the new Deer Creek Bridge which took place on May 11<sup>th</sup>. If you have not seen it already, let me tell you, it's quite the bridge located on Road 224 just south of Ave 112.

Spanning 450 feet long, 35 feet wide, with 474,000 pounds of steel and 1,300 cubic yards of concrete; you've got to get out there and see it to appreciate it.

Just imagine how many cement trucks it took to haul all the needed concrete to the site for construction!

Here's the backstory on Deer Creek and why we are dedicating this bridge. With its shallow banks and sandy soils, Deer Creek would flood every five years or so like clockwork washing away the road. With consistent road closures, residents in the community would drive many miles of detours that soon became commonly used routes.

Today, residents and travelers will no longer need to take detours as the new bridge provides a permanent fix to the problem. It's going to take a lot, and I mean a lot, of water to wash out this bridge.

Deer Creek Bridge did not happen overnight, I'm proud of the partnerships that were built and the agencies who came together to get the job done.

Tulare County in collaboration with Caltrans, the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, TCAG, as well as the Arts Consortium, banded together to offer this \$3 million project to the community.



It was exciting for me, as Chairman, to be a part of the dedication for this worthwhile project and I commend the RMA team for a job well done on the ceremony.

Finally to cap off the affair, Mother Nature provided us some water naturally running through Deer Creek giving a picturesque dedication for the new bridge.

I've also spent some time this month at the Porterville Fair, a great event the local community looks forward to every May.

2016 marked the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Porterville Fair, and this was the third year we opened the fair up to allow 4-H members from throughout the county to participate. I enjoyed seeing the increase of exhibitor numbers, increase of business participation, and increased support at the Livestock Auction.

The sale was yet another success and a great event for the community. And to close out this year's fair, I was on hand cooking at the annual awards dinner and appreciation event, doctoring up my specialty beans.

In other matters, the Board and I are worried about this issue of dead trees up in the mountains. With the fire season upon us, the Board and county staff are working diligently in finding solutions to address the

tree mortality crisis in our forests.

Efforts are underway with a locally established Tree Mortality Task Force that is also involved as a participant on the greater statewide Tree Mortality Task Force. Tulare County is one of ten counties included in the Governor's Declared Disaster Areas for tree mortality. Areas such as Balch Park, Pine Flat, CA Hot Springs, Sequoia Crest, Posey area, Alpine Village and the

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Sugarloaf region are exhibiting the greatest damage.

It's estimated there are over 29 million dead trees in California and about 20 million of those are identified in the southern Sierra range. Local damage assessments are underway and development of a mitigation plan is in progress. At this time the highest priority is addressing roadways, threats to structures, and any dead trees posing a danger to public safety.

Mike Ennis, District Five Chairman, Tulare County Board of Supervisors

## Program Update: Tulare County Animal Services

Tulare County Animal Services' shelter officially completed their renovation on March 10, 2016, after a nearly six month remodel. This project was long overdue; the original shelter was built more than 20 years ago and no longer accommodated the growing number of animals housed there.



Additionally, the shelter had broken down in spots due to the daily application of harsh cleaning materials. The risk of animal escapes and the health of both animals, and staff made it imperative to complete much needed renovations.



The canine section of the shelter was completely renovated, including all new color coded kennels to differentiate between adoptable, stray hold, and quarantined pets. The new kennels are designed to be much easier to clean and sanitize, in addition to providing clear information to the public on which dogs are available for immediate

adoption and which ones could potentially be fostered.

The facility was expanded to include an isolation room for ill, medicated, or birthing cats, and a canine isolation room for housing puppies and mothers with newborns to protect them from illnesses normally found in the general population. The newly added treatment room will allow veterinarians to work onsite to provide immediate attention to ill or injured animals and perform onsite spaying and neutering.

Lastly, the back of the shelter was renovated to better support the onsite laundry and cleaning facilities, and the purchase of a new incinerator allowed for the replacement of the out of commission incinerator.

The remodeled shelter will enable Animal Services to provide the residents of the County better service by providing a more organized, professional looking

shelter and more importantly, providing a healthier animal population for residents to adopt.

In addition to the renovations and as part of Animal Services restructuring and rebranding efforts, the County's Animal Control ordinances were updated, Tulare County Animal Services Advisory Committee By-Laws were adopted, Animal Services website [tcanimalservices.org](http://tcanimalservices.org) was launched, and new logos were developed.

All of these things combined has resulted in a far greater emphasis on community engagement, enhanced and expanded services, and organizational transparency.

During the Open House held on May 13, Animal Services placed 63 animals through the adoption and foster-to-adopt program.



TULARE COUNTY  
ANIMAL CARE & ADOPTIONS

## 2016 Walking Works! Challenge

The results are in and this year 1,150 County of Tulare employees participated in the 5th annual Walking Works! Challenge held May 9-13.



Tulare County exceeded Fresno County's challenge in taking top honors within both categories in amount of participation and in the

overall highest average steps. Tulare edged out Fresno with 27% participation, a record setting high for the county. Fresno had 26% participation from its employees, and an average of 8,535 steps. Tulare County took the top spot in averaging 9,832 steps per day over the five day challenge.

Participation for all agencies and employees was entirely voluntary. Numerous departments had the highest participation of 100%, these

included Cooperative Extension, Purchasing, and the Retirement department. Board of Supervisors followed closely behind with 88% participation.

General Services walked the highest average of steps with 13,624 steps during the challenge and the County Administrator's Office was close behind with 13,513 average of steps.

Through funding provided by Anthem Blue Cross, pedometers were provided to participating employees so they could count their steps.

## Supervisors Announce 2015 Employee of the Year

Productivity, efficiency, high performance, willingness to accept new responsibility, contributions to morale, and extraordinary services are attributes that all Tulare County employees strive to achieve when they report to work. In 2015, one Tulare County employee outshined the rest.

Rodger Keller was named as the 2015 Tulare County Employee of the Year, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors announced this month. Officer Keller works as a probation officer assigned to the Porterville Police Department as a Police/ Probation Partnership Officer monitoring high risk offenders, indirectly working to uphold public safety throughout the county.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Mike Ennis said more than 100 County of Tulare employees were nominated from 19 departments for this prestigious award.



“To be the most outstanding employee in 2015 among thousands of hard working people is a great honor,” said Chairman Ennis. “Officer Keller’s willingness to go the extra mile, his readiness to assist others, and efforts in training new probation officers is to be commended.”

Officer Keller was nominated by his peers for his organizational skills that have proven to be an asset to the Probation Department. This has shown through in his exceptional work in the special enforcement unit. During the last 12 months Officer Keller made over 900 individual contacts, conducted 519 searches, and administered 375 drug screens without incident.

The top reasons for nominating Officer Keller include his expression of leadership, patience, approachability, and willingness to get the job done. Having worked for the county since 1992, other probation officers look to Keller for guidance and expertise on complex probation matters.

“He is an excellent example of a ‘team player’ as he is always willing to assist other officers in the field,” stated Chief Probation Officer, Christie Myer. “Officer Keller routinely mentors less experienced staff, providing guidance and expertise in complex matters based on his years of experience.”

In addition to his regular duties, he is a department Range Master and Simunitions Instructor. He is also an excellent presenter, routinely providing instruction in the areas of Policy and Procedure, Officer Involved Shootings, and Stress Management.



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)

## #LEAD Program Holds Graduation

On May 24, over 76 youth were recognized for successfully completing the third cohort of the #LEAD program. In recognition for their efforts, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, CSET, HHS, and community members graduated #LEAD students from Visalia, Tulare, and Porterville at a ceremony held at College of the Sequoias Visalia Campus.

The Tulare County Step Up #LEAD (Leading, Educating, Advocating, and Dedication) program engages high school

students to be leaders and mentors, providing an alternative to the cycle of the welfare and foster care system. Participants learn life skills, college and career planning, and service learning for the benefit of their communities, and ultimately themselves.

A total of 69 students who successfully completed the program with a participation rate of 80% have been offered the opportunity to work at a job based upon their future career interest. In addition, 21 seniors

who applied for the #LEAD scholarship will be receiving funds for the college or vocation education program they will attend this fall.

Success of the program was attributed to local partners leveraging resources. # LEAD program partners include the Board of Supervisors, CSET, Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency, College of the Sequoias, Porterville Community College, Tulare County Youth Commission, and all participating school districts.



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

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

## Peace Officers Memorial



Hundreds of law enforcement officers from numerous agencies across Tulare County gathered along with the family, friends and loved ones of those officers who have died in the line of duty. Board Chairman Mike Ennis, Sheriff Mike Boudreaux, District Attorney Tim Ward, Chaplain Kevin Rachel, and COS Police Chief Bob Masterson spoke at the event held on May 4th.

The annual Peace Officer Memorial ceremony has taken place at the memorial, located on the corner of Woodland Street and Burrel Avenue in Visalia, for the last 14 years. Flowers placed by members of law enforcement, family and friends of the fallen lay on the memorial site. A white carnation was laid on the granite monument for all 25 fallen officers dating back to 1889.



### 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 Carrie Crane.

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### MAY/JUNE COUNTY ACTIVITIES, DEADLINES, EVENTS, MEETINGS

#### Event/Meeting: (Date/Time)

#### More Information:

Board of Supervisors' Meeting: 9 a.m. June 14, June 28	(559) 636-5000
Memorial Holiday: May 30	Office Closed
Board of Supervisors—No Meeting: May 31	(559) 636-5000
Tulare County Planning Commission: 9:00 a.m. May 25, June 14	(559) 624-7000
Tulare County Youth Commission: 3 p.m. June 27	(559) 636-5000

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**Places to Go Play:** Col. Allensworth State Historic Park is located in southwest Tulare County. This park memorializes the first town that was founded, financed and governed by African Americans. The park is open Friday thru Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and for special events. Learn more about Col. Allensworth State Historic Park and other places to "Go Play" in Tulare County at [www.tularecountymap.com](http://www.tularecountymap.com).