



COUNTY OF TULARE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NEWSLETTER

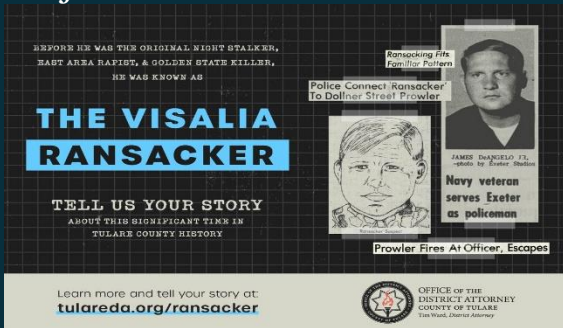
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ISSUE #4 JUNE 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

The Visalia Ransacker: A Community Remembers

Visalia in the 1970s was not much different than it is today. It's bigger now, yes, but the sense of community and shared history still runs strong.

Ever since I began my career as a Tulare County prosecutor, people would ask me about the Visalia Ransacker. Any new leads? Suspects? But there were always more than just technical questions about the case; it was personal for residents who lived here during that time.



When the Ransacker, also known as Joseph DeAngelo aka the Golden State Killer, was arrested just over three years ago, people began to share their memories of life 45 years ago and the climate of fear the Ransacker brought to the city. Parents locking doors and buying big dogs or weapons. Sightings, rumors. Some were even victimized by the Ransacker and remember odd items in the house rearranged or stolen. Many remember how the community came together to support the Snelling family after Professor Snelling's death at the hands of the Ransacker and his later encounter with the Visalia Police Department.

Everyone had a story.

Our office and local media have done a good job keeping the public informed on this case, but it is the community that holds the real history.

Inspired by the Sacramento District Attorney's Office, we in Tulare County are embarking on a community project like no other. We want your story. What was life like during the time of the Ransacker? How did you or your family protect yourselves? If you did not live here during that time, what did you hear about this mysterious figure? What were your thoughts when he was arrested and later sentenced for crimes across California?

Our office intends to publish these memories later this summer around the first anniversary of the Ransacker's sentencing. Tell your story at www.tulareda.org/ransacker.

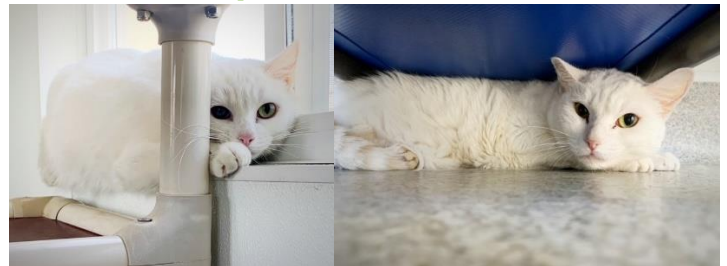
Tim Ward
Tulare County District Attorney

Celebrating Public Works

The Public Works Branch of RMA has one goal: to keep Tulare County moving. Whether filling a quarter million potholes each year or maintaining the county's 359 bridges, these hardworking men and women are the caretakers of the county's transportation infrastructure, including the department's crown jewel: 2,965 miles of maintained roads. The road network is an important tool, providing safe and reliable access for residents to schools and jobs, farmers to markets, and families and friends to each other. To further these connections, Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT) has a fleet of 24 buses, which each year cover a million miles total to move a quarter million passengers. To improve ride quality, the transit fleet now offers Wi-Fi on all buses.

May 16 – 22 is National Public Works Week, and we are recognizing the hardworking staff who support the county and keep it moving. This article highlights a bit of what Public Works does for you. (cont., page 2)

Animal Adoption Corner



Caroline & Coconut, six years old, are very sad cats. They were removed from the only home they have ever known when their owner was found some time after she had passed away. They have now survived both of their owners and truly need a patient and compassionate retirement home. Caroline & Coconut currently live together in the Tulare County Animal Shelter cattery but are still adjusting to their new surroundings. They are shy and quiet girls that staff believe would be unobtrusive in a new home. They would need a quiet household of understanding adults who would give them all the time they need to adjust. They have lived with other cats and enjoyed their company, but they have never lived with dogs. Caroline's & Coconut's (pictured left to right) adoption fees are sponsored, so there would be no cost to having these girls join your family.

Call County staff at the Tulare County Animal Shelter to inquire about how Caroline & Coconut can brighten your life today at (559) 636-4050!

Larry Micari
District One

Pete Vander Poel
District Two

Amy Shuklian
District Three

Eddie Valero
District Four

Dennis Townsend
District Five

BOARD STAFF: Tammie Weyker Adkins, Chief of Staff ■ Alicia Balderas ■ Patrick Burks ■ CLERK OF THE BOARD: Melinda Benton, Chief Clerk

A View from the Top

Though this last year saw a curtailment on almost any event with two or more individuals meeting in the same room, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors found new ways to connect with its constituents. From virtual town halls, to releasing weekly videos through Board Staff and HHSA's Community Outreach Team, to live-streaming, our Board Members tried new ways to keep up and get "out on the town."

As the COVID-19 case numbers decrease and vaccinations increase, our county continues to open. Some events will still be held virtually, many non-profit organizations are implementing creative ways of fundraising for their causes, and Board Members are planning town halls for this summer and fall season.

Recently, Chairwoman Shuklian attended the Leadership Visalia graduation, a 10-month leadership program through the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. One of our own Board staff members, Alicia Balderas, was one of the graduates.

Supervisor Valero recently held a virtual town hall for Goshen to discuss the future 52 modular home project by Salt + Light and Self-Help Enterprises, Inc. There were 33 in attendance.

Supervisor Townsend has been strategizing with County and private partners on broadband solutions and is planning a town hall in Camp Nelson for July 22 at 1 p.m.

Supervisor Micari is planning an outdoor town hall for his Three Rivers community members at the Lions Rodeo Grounds in Three Rivers on June 19 at 10 a.m.

Supervisor Vander Poel is celebrating the one-year anniversary of the implementation of the water treatment function at the Alpaugh CSD to eradicate the arsenic naturally occurring in their water.

Celebrating Public Works (cont.)

The Maintenance Division is a diverse collection of workers operating countywide, with responsibilities including performing road overlays, patching potholes, maintaining road shoulders, plowing snow in our mountain communities, and responding to storm events and flooding. In addition, our traffic control workers stripe our roadways, paint pavement markings, make and install signs, and program traffic signals. The Heavy Equipment Division maintains equipment such as dozers, graders, trucks, compactors, and fire engines for Public Works, the Solid Waste Department, and the Fire Department. This group is split between the Central Road Yard near Visalia and four other road yards throughout the County. They are always ready to serve and frequently assist efforts by the HHSA, the Sheriff's Office, and the Tulare County Office of Emergency Services.

The Design, Development, and Construction Group is responsible for major road improvement projects, such as the recent widening of Caldwell Avenue between the City of Visalia and the 99 freeway, and bridge rehabilitation and replacement projects, such as the Avenue 416 Bridge project. The Group also provides in-house construction management for projects and coordinates closely with private developers on projects throughout the county.

The Special Projects Group is responsible for a variety of activities and programs covering many disciplines, from running TCaT buses and the recently constructed Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility project to management of Sequoia Field, the county's general aviation airport. The Group operates utility services for rural communities, including two water systems and nine wastewater treatment plants. Additional duties include staffing the Tulare County Flood Control District, an independent special district that implements and supports flood control projects countywide, such as the Success Reservoir Enlargement Project.

Group 4 is our County Surveyor's Office, which provides field and office support to Public Works and other County Departments for a variety of design, construction, and boundary projects. This group assists with property subdivisions, maintains vital parcel records for every property in the county, and is responsible for maintaining survey monuments throughout the region. Because of its expertise and skilled staff, this office also serves as the Surveyor of record for Kings County.

The dedicated and exceptional staff of Public Works collaborates closely with the Planning and Fiscal branches of the Resource Management Agency, as well as other departments and agencies, to effect its mission throughout Tulare County. While it is often done behind the scenes, Public Works is always hard at work keeping our infrastructure secure and functional for the County and for you.



Change Agents

Change was the theme of 2020 in all aspects of life, and 2021 continues to provide us with both challenges and opportunities. Over the last seven years, Tulare County Animal Services (TCAS), a division of HHSA, has made it their mission to become a progressive, humane shelter and a resource center for both human and animal welfare. This mission was put into overdrive with the addition of challenges presented by a global pandemic.

In 2014, the kennels were in severe disrepair, and the shelter had a poor reputation in both the community and the industry. With help and support from the Board of Supervisors, HHS Agency Administration, and staff, Patrick Hamblin, the then kennel manager, was able to do an immense amount of work to set the foundation for future success, with a remodel of the shelter to improve humane conditions and a rebranding of the public face of the Division, an overhaul of outdated County Ordinances, and the creation of the TCAS Advisory Committee, on which Supervisor Shuklian sits and provides truly valuable insight and support.

The last 18 months have brought a whirlwind of amazing things happening in the world of Animal Services. The pandemic forced agencies to truly take a deep-dive look into their policies and to begin to shift their focus from an antiquated enforcement-based model to a community-focused, resource-based model. TCAS is continually seeking opportunities to improve its service to both the animals and people of the community.



The shelter is now a more humane place than ever before, with best-practice protocols for intake, disease control, humane handling techniques, dog play groups, and regular enrichment for all animals. Over 90% of the animals are leaving the shelter alive, either with their owners, rescue groups, or adoptive homes – an incredible jump from 2014 when the rate was just 13%.

In 2020 TCAS was one of only twelve shelters in the nation to receive a Transformational Change Award from Best Friends Animal Society. Shelter leadership has been asked to sit on expert panels for several symposiums and is being featured at this year's Best Friends National Conference, widely attended by thousands of industry professionals. Shelter staff are all certified through Fear Free Shelters for humane animal-handling techniques.

These successful changes have directly led to over \$170,000 in grants and

At the Table Together

Our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness continue to be on the minds of our Board of Supervisors and the Task Force on Homelessness. The strategic plan to address homelessness in Tulare County, "Pathway Home: Responding to Homelessness in Tulare County," continues to be implemented – even throughout the pandemic.

The goals include increasing access to permanent housing, increasing access to support services, expansion of services for subpopulations with special needs, prevention for those at risk, and strengthening public engagement and community partnerships.

The pandemic created unique opportunities in this arena, such as Project RoomKey, which targeted housing services for individuals at high risk for serious complications of COVID-19, Project HomeKey, which provides permanent supportive housing, and funding for multiple homeless and housing-related programs in multiple jurisdictions in our community.

This year and the last have seen unprecedented growth in community and state partnerships. For example, the Project RoomKey site titled Sequoia Village enabled new partnerships with organizations such as UPHoldings and RH Community Builders, while strengthening relationships with the Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance and Kaweah Delta's Street Medicine Team.

We are grateful for our partnership and look forward to future opportunities.

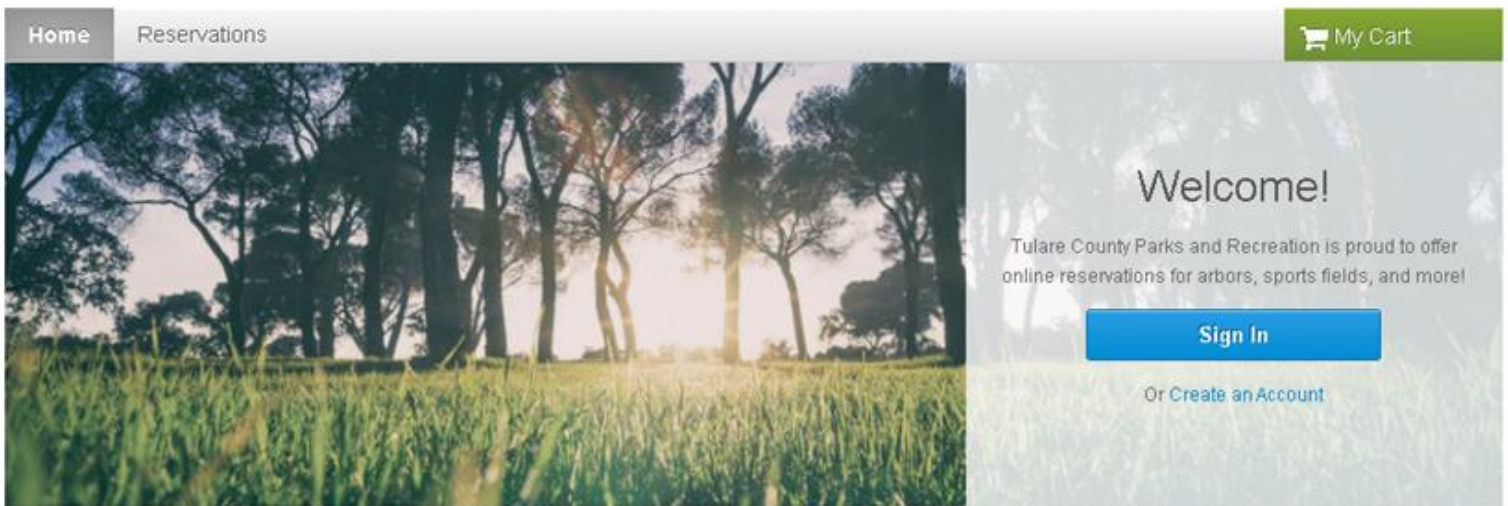
nearly \$200,000 from private donors since mid-2019, to support pilot programs and increase efforts to assist animals and humans in Tulare County.

TCAS is also dedicated to assisting the community. During the recent SQF Complex fires, our Animal Control officers assisted emergency responders by sheltering animals in place and evacuating animals. Our shelter staff joined forces with the Tulare County Farm Bureau's Executive Director Tricia Stever-Blattler, members of the Woodlake Lions Club, the Porterville Fairgrounds, and numerous community members from all over the county to provide shelter for over 280 evacuated animals at three different emergency shelter locations. Supervisor Valero graciously volunteered his time at the Woodlake Rodeo Ground location, and other County Departments sent staff to assist at sheltering sites. This type of large-scale response and emergency sheltering was an unprecedented event, and TCAS staff were phenomenal in their dedication and perseverance throughout the event.

One of the most exciting new developments for TCAS has been the addition of a Veterinary Clinic to the shelter site. This addition has been a long-awaited project, made possible through support from the Board of Supervisors, County and HHS Agency Administration, our Community and Animal Welfare Partners, and a very generous set of anonymous donors who believe in TCAS's mission to serve the community. The clinic is set to open for services to the public in the fall of 2021 and will provide various low-cost veterinary services, such as vaccination, spay and neuter, microchipping, and routine wellness services. Future plans for this program include mobile veterinary services brought into underserved communities that would otherwise have no access to care.

TCAS staff are a group of incredibly hard-working individuals dedicated to the lives of the animals and people of Tulare County. The program is quickly becoming regarded as one of the leading Animal Services organizations in the state, with national organizations commending progressive programming efforts. While there are always plans for continued improvement and exciting future opportunities, TCAS is well on its way to providing the best services possible to Tulare County.

Park Place: Gathering Socially



Tulare County Parks and Recreation is pleased to announce the launch of a new online reservation system. This new system allows users to create a profile, view reservation history, securely pay for reservations, and preview arbor photos and descriptions. Park patrons will now be able to conveniently and safely plan their next social gathering from their smartphone or personal computer.

According to Parks and Recreation Manager Neil Pilegard, “This new system will help us provide an additional level of customer service. Folks will still be able to make reservations in our office or over the phone, but now they can also make reservations from the comfort and safety of their own homes.”

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, county parks remained open to the public. However, reservations were put on hold. During that time, staff worked diligently on launching the new system. Once restrictions on gatherings were relaxed in April 2021, the system was ready to go, just in time for Easter weekend. Patrons who have already taken advantage of the new electronic reservations have provided positive feedback on their experiences.

Upgrading to more modern technology enables Tulare County Parks and Recreation to serve the public efficiently and effectively. Standard reservations will automatically be approved and calendared after transactions have been completed. To make reservations online, go to <https://apm.activecommunities.com/tularecountyparks/Home>

Large and special events still require completion of an application and approval. Please contact us directly at TulareCountyParks@tularecounty.ca.gov or (559) 205-1100.

Parks and Recreation continues to follow the latest guidelines from the CDC, state, and local public health to ensure the health and safety of the public and staff. Please follow us on Facebook at Tulare County Parks & Recreation or check our website <https://tularecountyparks.org/> for the latest information on restrictions.

For further assistance or questions, please contact (559) 205-1100.