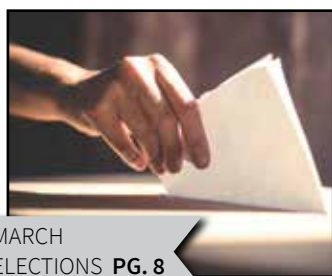


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RE: Mid Kings River Groundwater Sustainability Agency Proposition 218 election

Dear MKRGSA Landowner,

The Kings County Farm Bureau (KCFB) has closely followed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) since its inception in 2014. KCFB supports local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) efforts to bring the Tulare Lake Subbasin (TLSB) into compliance with the law. However, KCFB disagrees with the Mid Kings River Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MKRGSA) Proposition 218 fee study and encourages landowners to vote it down.

GSAs are local government agencies with limited ability to raise funds. One primary method of funding any GSA is for that agency to charge a per-acre assessment to landowners. Landowners must first approve the assessment by voting on a Proposition 218 election. GSA are also allowed to charge service fees. In February of this year, the Mid Kings River GSA (MKRGSA) published a Proposition 218 fee study, which included an operations budget for the GSA. The fee study proposes up to a \$25 per acre assessment and pumping fees of up to \$95 per acre-foot of pumped groundwater. As described, the assessments and fees would fund a budget of over \$11 million a year.

After carefully considering the proposed per-acre assessment and the groundwater pumping fees and allocation, KCFB's Board of Directors formally opposed the Proposition 218 election during its March meeting. KCFB is aware of the need to fund the MKRGSA to maintain local control over SGMA and believes supporting a future Proposition 218 election is essential. However, KCFB will only support an effort to fund the MKRGSA after the formation of advisory committees, and input from those committees is honestly considered in forming the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the TLSB.

Considering these factors, the Kings County Farm Bureau encourages all Mid-Kings River GSA landowners to vote no on the Proposition 218 ballot mailed to you. Additionally, KCFB recommends protesting the groundwater pumping fees. Landowners must submit a formal protest to the GSA and include APN numbers for each parcel they own within the MKRGSA boundaries. Protest forms must be printed, filled out, and returned by each landowner and can be found online at <https://www.kcfb.org/sgma-gsa>.

Ballots and protest forms must be received before the MKRGSA public hearing on April 23, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. They can be mailed or hand-delivered to the Kings County Water District at 200 Campus Drive, Hanford, CA 93230, or hand-delivered at the public hearing on April 23, 2024, at the Koinonia Church, 12536 Hanford Armona Rd. Hanford, CA 93230.

If you need help completing your form or delivering it to the MKRGSA, don't hesitate to get in touch with KCFB by phone at (559)584-3557 or email at [kcfb@kcfb.org](mailto:kcfb@kcfb.org), and we will assist you.

Sincerely,



Dusty Ference  
Executive Director



### Purpose

Protect, preserve and enhance agriculture in Kings County

### Vision

Ensure that every farmer has the right to farm and protect their heritage

### Values

Our Members | Proactive Representative  
Reliable | Trusted Resource

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dusty.ference@kcfb.org

### Farm Life Advertising

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## Executive Director Report

By Dusty Ference, Executive Director



Dusty Ference

On March 26, 2024, the Mid-Kings River GSA (MKRGSA) adopted a pumping cap policy. The policy was first presented at the GSA's February meeting and passed with three directors in favor and no opposition. The board accepted a modification to the policy not previously published.

The MKRGSA website has a draft version of the policy, which will go into effect on April 1, 2024. In summary, pumpers are limited to half an acre-foot per acre from the A zone aquifer, three acre-feet per acre from the B zone aquifer, or two acre-feet per acre from the C zone aquifer. Those amounts are **not** combinable, and if a grower intends to pump from multiple aquifer zones, their total pumping allocation will be less than three acre-feet per acre.

The MKRGSA board of directors authorized the GSA manager to approve a pumping cap variance for growers that pump solely from the A zone aquifer. Theoretically, a grower could justify pumping more than half an acre-foot per acre if they do not currently own wells deeper than the A zone aquifer. The board did not discuss or offer any additional parameters or guidelines.

This meeting drew a crowd like never before at a MKRGSA board meeting. Many public members criticized the MKRGSA for not forming stakeholder advisory committees. One grower even read from the MKRGSA's Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), which stipulated that the board should have formed advisory committees within 120 days of the organization's formation.

Steven Dias resigned from the Kings County Water District (KCWD) Board of Directors and the MKRGSA early in March. The GSA's attorney, Ray Carlson, described how a new director will fill the newly created vacancy on the board. According to the authorities JPA, the Kings County Water District fills three seats on the MKRGSA board of directors. During the next regularly scheduled meeting of the KCWD, the board will receive Mr. Dias' resignation formally and can choose to accept applications for his replacement. At the next regular meeting of the KCWD, the board may decide to appoint a new director from the list of qualified applicants.

KCFB will continue to engage with all the GSAs in the Tulare Lake Subbasin. Local agencies must maintain control of SGMA, and GSAs must succeed. For both of these things to happen, agriculture must create solutions for the subbasin to comply with SGMA. 🌱

## GSA MONTHLY BOARD MEETING CALENDAR

### Greater Kaweah GSA

**Date:** Second Monday

**Time:** 1:00pm

**Location:** 2975 N. Farmersville Blvd.  
Farmersville, CA

### Southfork Kings GSA

**Date:** Third Thursday

**Time:** 5:30pm

**Location:** 429 C St.  
Lemoore, CA

### El Rico GSA

**Date:** Second Tuesday

**Time:** 1:00pm

**Location:** 1001 Chase Ave.  
Corcoran CA

### Tri-County Water Authority

**Date:** First Thursday

**Time:** 1:00pm

**Location:** 944 Whitley Ave.  
Corcoran, CA

### Mid Kings GSA

**Date:** Second Tuesday

**Time:** 1:00pm

**Location:** 200 North Campus Dr.  
Hanford, CA

### Southwest Kings GSA

<https://www.swkgsa.org/>

## Outreach efforts have made great achievements in 2024

By Breanna Larman



Breanna Larman

*Why was the Easter Bunny hired for the job?  
He had the most Eggs-perience!*

On Thursday, March 14th, KCFB and the Kings County Office of Education put on our annual agriculture education field day, “Farm Day,” at the Kings Fairgrounds. Welcoming nearly 2,000 Kings County third graders from 32 schools for a day of exposure to our industry through 52 presentations. From apiarists, water dowers, brand inspectors, and environmentalists to 4H animal projects and farm equipment, we are grateful for the willingness of the community to participate in this event. We also had over 80 volunteers

from the community to assist in helping the day function. We would like to thank all the presenters, volunteers, donors, and sponsors of Farm Day 2024. New to Farm Day this year was a presenting sponsor, Burris Park Outdoor Education, and Food and Beverage Sponsors, Golden State Farm Credit and AgWest Farm Credit. A huge thank you to our sponsors!

Right around the corner on Wednesday, April 10th, is our 2024 Member Appreciation Night at the Rawhide baseball stadium in Visalia. Contact KCFB to claim your FREE TICKETS for you and your family!

This month is exciting for Farm Life as it is the first month of expansion from a 12-page newspaper to a 16-page newspaper. With valuable content growing for our members, we are eager to fill the new space with Ag industry news, SGMA updates, water policy, GSA news and the occasion dad joke. We have brought on a few new advertisers in the paper this year, Schuil Ag Reality and Kaweah Pump. 🌱



**CALIFORNIA STATE RESOURCE CONTROL BOARD**  
**TULARE LAKE SUBBASSIN**  
**PROBATIONARY HEARING**

**Public Board Hearing**  
Tuesday, April 16  
9:30 a.m.

**In-Person Location**  
Coastal Hearing Room  
Joe Serna Jr. CalEPA  
Headquarters  
Building  
1001 I Street  
Second Floor  
Sacramento, CA  
95814

**To provide a comment remotely:**  
Before or on the day of the public Board hearing, fill out our online form at [bit.ly/speaker-card-form](https://bit.ly/speaker-card-form).

Note: the form will not accept responses until April 10, 2024, at 8:00 am. The Board Clerk will provide you with Zoom login information in advance of the meeting.

**For more information** about participating remotely, please visit [bit.ly/providingcomments](https://bit.ly/providingcomments).

**Spanish interpretation will be provided.** For language services other than Spanish, please contact **916.341-5254** or [OPP-LanguageServices@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:OPP-LanguageServices@waterboards.ca.gov)



**KCFB WATER FORUM**  
**SGMA IN THE TULARE LAKE BASIN**

Thursday May 30th  
West Hills Lemoore, Room 253

9-10am  
Trade Show, Coffee and Pastries  
10-12pm  
Discussion

Event panel speakers:  
Tulare Sub-Basin GSA Directors Deanna Jackson, Dennis Mills, and Jeof Wyrick

**THIS EVENT IS FREE TO THE PUBLIC!**

## AG NEWS IN BRIEF

In an effort to give additional farmers and ranchers an opportunity to apply for historic Inflation Reduction Act funding, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California has extended the popular NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) until April 26, 2024.

"This additional month is intended to give even more farmers and ranchers in California an opportunity to apply for nearly \$20 million in available funding for CSP this Fiscal Year," said NRCS California State Conservationist Carlos Suarez. "CSP helps producers address their unique resource concerns and supports them to achieve their stewardship goals through this popular program."

CSP provides producers payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities integrated within their agricultural operations. CSP enhancements like cover

crops, ecologically-based pest management, and buffer strips help producers improve soil health while protecting water quality. Other CSP activities help sustain and increase pollinator and beneficial insect habitat in harmony with agriculture production on their land.

SB 1003 authored by Senator Bill Dodd (D Napa) passed Senate Energy, Utilities and Communication unanimously (17-0) and is now headed to Senate Appropriations. SB 1003 would direct the Office of Electrical Infrastructure Safety (OEIS) to consider the timeliness of infrastructure upgrades to ensure that the maximum amount of risk from utility sparked wildfires is reduced in the shortest amount of time. California Farm Bureau provided a letter of support for the bill and has routinely advocated for greater transparency and consideration of the electric rate affordability crisis when determining which mitigation measures are appropriate.

### DAIRY PRODUCERS CAN ENROLL FOR 2024 DAIRY MARGIN COVERAGE

California Farm Bureau sent a

letter to the Environmental Protection Agency in support for San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program which would be a grant for \$150 million, a large position would go to agriculture.

On March 21, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued their final "Clean Cars" rule, which will ultimately require auto manufacturers to shift towards larger degrees of electric and plug-in hybrid car production in the coming years. While the rule is somewhat relaxed from its original proposal, significant changes will be required for most automakers. The Biden Administration has aimed to reduce the country's greenhouse gas pollution by at least 50% by 2030, and this rule is a major part of his plans to meet that goal. If the rule goes into effect, automakers will be required to comply with new standards beginning with production year 2027 models.

The rule has already faced significant criticism from Republican counterparts, who argue that it would effectively lead to the ban of cars relying on traditional fuels. Even organized labor groups for the auto industry have been critical of this shift. EV sales have slowed as of late, with many citing costs and inadequate charging infrastructure as key reasons for this decline. This rule does permit more "conventionally powered" vehicles to be permissible, but it would require significant improvements to the efficiency of such engines. There are serious questions though as to whether the ongoing expansion of charging stations can adequately meet the demands of both federal and state governments—which is only one hurdle out of several for the practicality of making such a drastic shift over the next decade.

Sites Reservoir Awarded Additional \$205 Million in Federal Funding - Congress recently approved the Bureau of Reclamation's recommendation to allocate \$205.6 million in federal funding from the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN Act) to the Sites Reservoir Project (Project). This funding marks the largest single WIIN Act award for a storage project in history. Sites Reservoir is designed to enhance water supply throughout California while providing environmental benefits by storing water to support native wildlife and habitat during droughts. The Project will add 1.5 million acre-feet of storage capacity, significantly improving the state's water

flexibility and resiliency in drier years.

Last summer, the project received \$30 million in funding from Reclamation through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. With this recent \$205.6 million allocation from the WIIN Act, Sites Reservoir has secured a total of \$439.3 million in federal contributions to date. This funding covers the estimated capital cost for Reclamation's 9% participation and sets the groundwork for achieving the 16% participation goal as more space becomes available in the reservoir and additional funds are appropriated.

### RESEARCHERS STUDY WHETHER AGAVE CAN BE STATE'S NEXT DROUGHT-TOLERANT CROP

Researchers at the University of California, Davis, are studying agave plants as a potential drought-tolerant option for California farmers. The research is centered on agave genetics, virus susceptibility, pest control, soil management and crop productivity. UC Davis began investigating the crop after farm owners Stuart and Lisa Woolf established a research fund to determine if agave is viable for agriculture in California. Agave, used to produce tequila and mezcal in Mexico, can be distilled into spirits, used as a fiber or converted into a sweetener.

Model Workplace Violence Prevention Plan and Fact Sheet Issued by CAL/OSHA - On Sept. 30, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 553. It added to the California Labor Code section 6401.9, which requires every covered employer to establish, implement, and maintain an effective workplace violence prevention plan ("WVPP"). The law takes effect on July 1, 2024.

Coverage exemptions include (1) an employee teleworking from a location chosen by the employee that is not under the employer's control and (2) a place of employment not accessible to the public where never more than nine employees work and that complies with Cal/OSHA injury and illness prevention program provisions.

Cal/OSHA, which will enforce the new requirement, recently issued a Model WVPP for General Industry (Non-Health Care Settings) and a related Fact Sheet. The Model WVPP is designed to assist employers in drafting their own WVPP. An employer may—but need not—use this model as a template for its own WVPP. The model will require substantial customization to fit an employer's workplace. 🐾



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## SERVICE OFFERED

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- 251<500 acres: up to 4 tests
- 501+: up to 2 tests



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 559-309-3040

*\*Members of the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFR) Community are encouraged to apply. SDFR growers may qualify for additional pump tests and services. Pump tests are provided for irrigation wells only.*



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## Ag Commissioner's Compliance Report



Jimmy Hook,  
Agricultural  
Commissioner/Sealer

## A Fruit Fly Find. Now What?

Contributed by Lynda Schrupf

California's thriving agriculture industry has long been the backbone of the state's economy. However, it faces an ongoing battle against invasive pests that threaten to compromise both crop yields and food security. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the County Agricultural Commissioners are contending with an exceptionally busy season of invasive fruit fly detections.

California agriculture officials believe the increased detections are likely due to a return to normal activities, particularly, travel following the pandemic and the emergence of new commerce and smuggling pathways in recent years, including e-commerce.

Once a detection occurs anywhere in the state, based on the survey data, pest biology, information from the (CDFA) *Bactrocera* Science Advisory Panel, recommendations provided by the CDFA Primary State Entomologist, and the CDFA "Action Plan for Cuelure Attracted Fruit Flies", CDFA decides if there is an infestation in the area. If CDFA determines there is an infestation, the infestation must next present a significant, clear, and imminent threat to the natural environment, agriculture, and economy of California and unless emergency action is taken, there is high potential for sudden future detections.

The Secretary of Agriculture can invoke Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(4) to carry out immediate emergency action to prevent the loss and damage to California's resources. A response plan to contain and eradicate the infestation cannot be implemented until proclamation of an emergency is published in the local newspaper. The proclamation will include a map of the treatment areas. Residents of properties affected by foliar bait or fruit removal treatments shall be notified in writing at least 48 hours in advance of any treatment in accordance with the Food and Agricultural Code, Section 5771-5779 and 5421-5436. Following foliar bait treatment, completion notices are left with residents detailing precautions to take and post-harvest intervals applicable to any fruit and vegetables on the property.

Because fruit flies can spread rapidly due to their ability to have very rapid generations, the response plan is implemented very quickly. Within the first 24 hours a core deployment of pest detection traps are placed within one square mile around each site where flies were found. Agricultural Commissioner inspectors are often involved in working cooperatively with CDFA to deploy and service these traps.

Within the first 72 hours the second, third and fourth buffers are established, and the appropriate number of traps are deployed in each of those designated buffer areas, all radiating out from the core buffer of 1 square mile around each fly find. Resulting in a total trapping area of 81 square miles.

As an example, for Oriental Fruit Fly, the trap density for the core calls for two types of fruit fly traps,



Oriental fruit fly



twenty-five McPhail and twenty-five Oriental Fruit Fly traps. Five traps per square mile outside of the core. This results in a total of 450 traps in the 81 square mile delimitation area. Traps in the core and the first buffer are checked by inspectors every day for the first week. The outer buffers must be checked within one week of their deployment. If no additional fruit flies are found, all traps go to a weekly servicing after the first week.

Life cycle projections are used to determine treatment and quarantine triggers as well as how long the delimitation traps remain in the field.

If these fruit fly infestations were not addressed it is like the following damage would occur: exotic fruit flies are internal feeders of fruit, and their presence therefore makes the fruit unfit for consumption, a loss of marketability and ability to ship food to other states and nations, the permanent establishment and spread of this pest would result in increased production and postharvest costs to safeguard commercial fruit from infestation, increased pesticide applications on both production agriculture and residential properties to mitigate damage, and lost economic activity and jobs from trade restrictions imposed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and foreign trade partners.

If you have questions about exotic fruit fly detections or would like more information, please feel free to contact, Lynda Schrupf, Kings County Department of Agriculture, [agstaff@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:agstaff@co.kings.ca.us) (559) 852-2830. 📞

## March Elections Produce Runoffs

By Steve Pastis

Less than 22% of all registered voters in Kings County took the time to participate in the March 5th elections, and about 90% of that voting was done through the mail. The results of the elections include four races that now head to November runoffs to be considered by area voters.

### State Assembly District 33

Alexandra Macedo received the most votes (39.42%) among the five candidates for the 33rd Assembly District. The runner-up was Xavier Avila with 26.77%. The two will have a runoff in the November elections.

Macedo, who is the fourth generation to be part of her family's livestock market, Tulare Sales Yard, supports "building what we need to be sure we have the water we need," pledging to respond with a "yes" to solutions for local water problems.

"Yes, to more storage, yes to more ways of moving water around, yes to safe drinking water, and yes to sustainable water management practices," she stated. "Our valley needs to secure a plentiful water supply to keep our farms and dairies working, providing the kind of good-paying jobs that let people live a middle-class life."

Meanwhile, Avila is a fourth-generation Portuguese-American farmer.

"From starting on my family's farm at 12 years old, to owning my own dairy in 1992, to working with dairymen and farmers across the valley, I've lived a life of Central Valley values," he said. "I served on the Land O'Lakes Corporate Board for nearly a decade where I focused on farm policy, working with various organizations such as DairyCares and Ag Council of California."

### U.S. Representative Congress District 22

Republican David Valadao, who currently represents California's 21st District (before redistricting) was the top vote-getter in Kings County with more than 36% of the vote. His opponent in the November election will be Democrat Rudy



Salas, who placed third in county voting with 24.43%, behind Republican Chris Mathys who placed second with 24.81%. However, the total results in the district showed Valadao with 32.7% of the vote to Salas' 31.3% , and Mathys in third with 22%.

As a result, Valadao and Salas will have a runoff in November.

Valadao pledges to, "continue working to promote legislation to strengthen agricultural programs, increase job opportunities, lower food cost, and ensure our farmers have the essential security needed to protect their businesses and provide food for the nation.

"As a dairy farmer, I understand the unique and challenging obstacles the agriculture industry faces," he said. "Burdensome regulations, environmental conditions, and federal agriculture programs are just a few of the issues that have serious impacts on the agriculture industry in California and across the nation."

Salas, who served five terms in the California State Assembly, was born and

*"Elections" continued on page 14*



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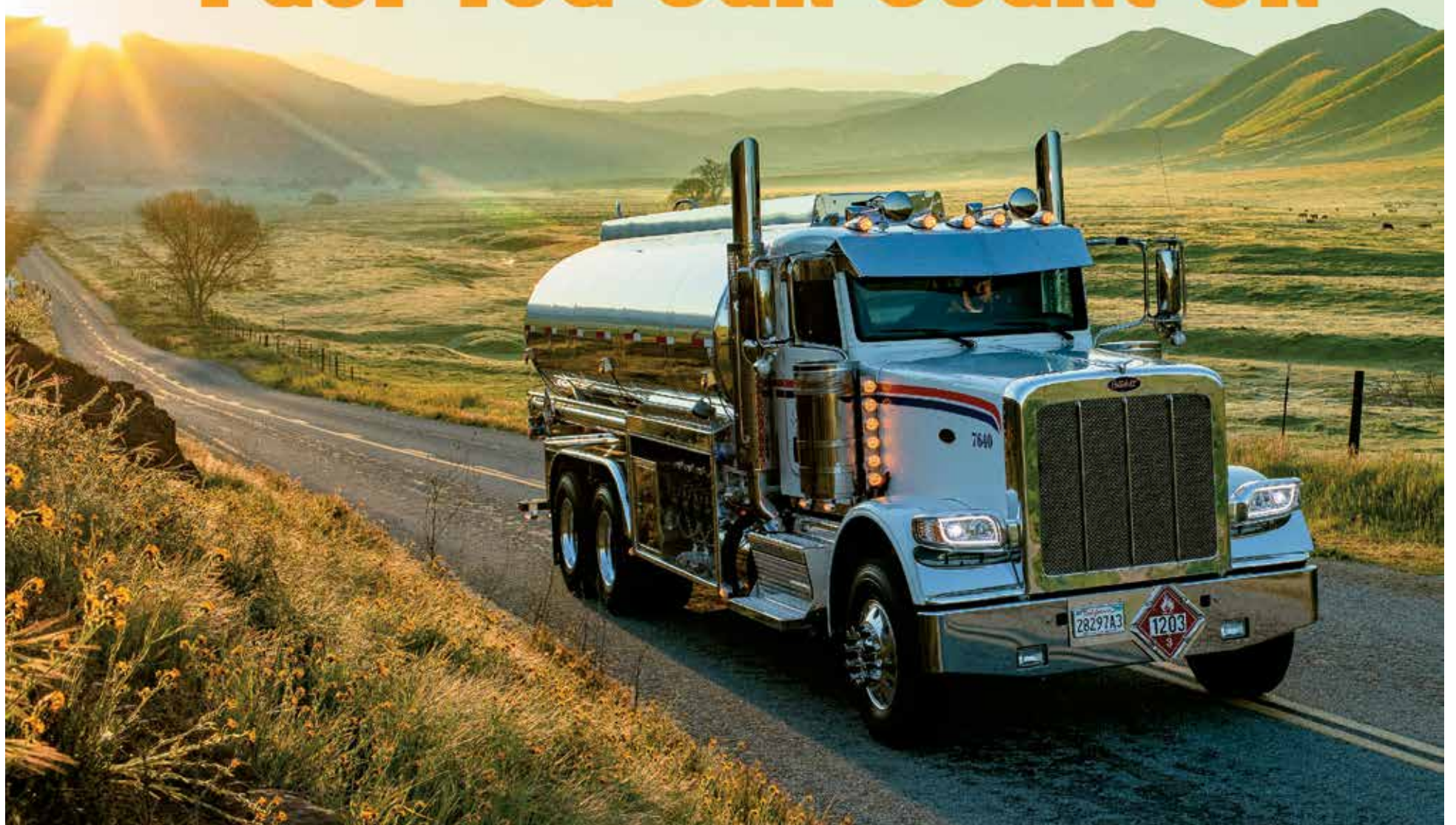
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# Kings County Rural Crime Report

Contributed by Detective Dakotah Fausnett

The Kings County Sheriff's Office Rural Crime Task Force is currently conducting several investigations.

March:

The Kings County Rural Crimes Task Force (KCRCTF) is currently investigating a case at the Hanford Post Office at 517 N Irwin Street. The KCRCTF warns the community, DO NOT use the Hanford Post Office to mail checks until this case has been solved. If you have any questions or think you have had a check stolen and cashed, please contact Deputy Fausnett directly.



Throughout the month of March, the KCRCTF has continued to stay busy investigating diesel theft, copper wire and theft of heavy equipment. There has also been a recent rise of beehive thefts throughout the county. We have continuously worked on these cases and are investigating similar trends by working alongside Tulare County Sheriff's Office.

This past month, we have seen a significant rise in copper wire and telephone wire theft near the southern end of the county. These types of cases are difficult to investigate because the theft is being done in the middle of the night and they are typically discovered by a worker with no suspect information. However, our unit has been writing geofence warrants, setting up game cameras and following up with recycling centers to identify suspects and bring them into custody.

The Kings County District Attorney assigned DA Investigator Ward to the Rural Crimes Prevention Task Force to assist the unit with investigations.

As always it is imperative that if anyone knows of or hears of any buying or selling obviously stolen equipment, to call the Sheriff's Office. We continue to investigate all Ag related thefts and encourage members to call and report all Ag related crimes. If we do not receive calls from our members and community, we may not be aware of certain crimes occurring in your area. 🙌

Detective Fausnett : (559) 639-8704

Detective Thomas: (559) 530-1701

Detective Holt: (559) 362-8928

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# FarmDay2024





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*"Elections" continued from page 8*

raised in the Central Valley. He worked as a farm laborer with his father, before moving on to graduate from UCLA and becoming the first Latino member of the Bakersfield City Council. In his final term in the California Assembly, he secured \$50 million of dedicated investments for Central Valley projects, including a clean water infrastructure, expansion of local nursing programs and the construction of an emergency response center

**U.S. Representative Congress District 20**

County voters had a different preference in the 20th District than voters in other parts of the district. Thirty-four percent of them preferred Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux to California Assemblyman Vince Fong, who received 25.5% of the votes in the county – but the highest number of votes in the district.

As the top two vote-getters in the district, the candidates now head to a November runoff, despite both being Republican Party candidates. “California is a state defined by its crises,” tweeted Fong. “One of them is the worsening drought and the lack of a stable water supply. Water is critical for our homes, businesses, and for food production for our state and nation. We must build needed water storage and conveyance projects.

“California’s water policies need to change to allow more water to be available for our communities and more infrastructure to be built so more water can be stored,” he added. “These improvements are critically important to the well-being of our state.”

“Over the course of the last 30 years, Washington, Sacramento, and radical environmentalist allies have repeatedly developed policies to worsen droughts afflicting the San Joaquin Valley and short-change our community during heavy storms by letting water flush out into the ocean rather than capturing it for use by our farms and communities,” said Boudreaux.

“I support reducing barriers to the construction of additional dams and reservoirs, increasing investment in water capture technologies,” he continued. “I also support renewing the key provisions of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act of 2016 to ensure that federal water managers are using the most cutting-edge science to guide decisions of when to pump water south of the Delta to our valley.”

**Kings County Supervisors District 5**

By a very small margin, Robert Thayer, with 29.98% of the vote, was the top vote-getter for the 5th District seat. Adam Medeiros placed second with 29.84% of the vote. The difference between the two candidates was six votes.

The competition now moves to a November runoff.

Thayer, who is nearing retirement as the undersheriff for the Kings County Sheriff’s Office, stated that he is fully committed to agriculture.

“I will be a fierce supporter of our agricultural community, our farmers, our field workers, and every single source and entity that provides food, milk, cotton, and every other product our county provides to the world,” he said.

Medeiros championed issues important to local farmers during his recent campaign for the U.S. Congress.

“The increasing need for dams and reservoirs has never been higher,” he stated. “Our current water infrastructure has not been updated in over 60 years. Federal and state governments must come together to develop more water storage so we can save our valley farming industry in California. In addition to creating more water storage, we need to reduce the amount lost to the ocean. Transferring water is currently the largest use of electricity in the state of California.

“Maintaining available water is about more than creating tax revenue, it is about food for people to eat,” he added. “By approving more water (dam) storage, we give our faithful farmers a reason to stay and maintain revenue, jobs, and above all else, real food.”

**County Supervisor District 2**

Incumbent Kings County Supervisor Richard Valle ran unopposed and received 100% of the votes cast. However, 350 voters in the 2nd District declined to cast a vote in this race. 🗳️



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