



## INSIDE



GRAND CHAMPION  
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## Kings Fair improvements slated for 2024 and beyond

By Lisa McEwen

Kings County residents will see major infrastructure improvements to the Kings Fairgrounds over the next several years thanks to a \$3.5 million award.

At a press conference held on the opening day of the Kings Fair, California Department of Food and Agriculture Deputy Secretary Michael Flores shared that deferred maintenance on 20,000 square feet of space will be completed due to funding from the

2022 Fairgrounds Resilience Centers Program. The program focuses on improving both local fairgrounds and other community facilities to enhance the state's emergency preparedness capabilities, especially in response to climate



Michael Flores, Deputy Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture awarding Kings Fair CEO Dena Rizzardo with \$3.5 million in funding for emergency readiness efforts.

*"Kings Fair" continued on page 3*

## Farmers needed for new conservation funding projects

By Lisa McEwen

The Conservation Agriculture Planning Grants Program (CAPGP) has awarded \$13.2 million in funding to 103 projects and local farmers interested in participating should call the Kings County Farm Bureau. There is no cost to growers.

The Excelsior-Kings River Resource Conservation District (EKRCDD), in partnership with the Sierra Resource Conservation District, have been awarded \$211,800 to work with farmers who are interested in developing plans to employ conservation agriculture practices on their properties. The plans would develop and implement practices such as soil health

management, nutrient management and irrigation water management design, along with carbon farm planning. A total of 33 farms within the two resource conservation districts need to be identified; 13 of those will be in the EKRCDD.

According to the California Department of Food and Agriculture's website, CAPGP is a new grant program within the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation. Its unique purpose is to open the pathway to additional



*"Farmers Needed" continued on page 2*



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## Member Highlight: Valley Strong Credit Union

Valley Strong is excited about being the newest supporter and member of Kings County Farm Bureau. As a KCFB supporter, they are most looking forward to engaging with businesses and owners in the Ag community. Getting the word out about Valley Strong and what they can offer to their business members

and their employees. Although new to the area Valley Strong has a history with KCFB as event participants. From an old favorite Taste of the Valley, to Wine vs Beer and our Harvest Classic Golf Tournament. Along with being excited about KCFB events in the community, Valley Strong is also eager to be of service to the board as a member, provide financial information to benefit the organization as needed, and be a resource to members of the Bureau.

Valley Strong currently has a branch location in Kings County under construction and it is scheduled to open in 2024. It will be located at 216 W 8th Street in Hanford. This will be a full-service branch, offering Consumer and Business Banking services to the community. Valley Strong also has a high school branch located on the Sierra Pacific High School campus as part of their Business Pathways program. Although their presence in Kings County is new, Valley Strong has been assisting Kings County residents for a number of years with Consumer Lending, Auto Loans, Mortgage & Home Equity Loans, as well as Residential Solar Loans. Valley Strong's specialty is offering full-service



Consumer and Business Banking, along with Cash Management and Wealth Management services. Their financial products include everything from

checking and savings accounts to money market and certificate accounts, as well as lending products for both businesses and consumers.

As one of the only credit unions to offer Business Banking to all entity types, Valley Strong's goal is to get to know their business owners and their businesses. Today they offer banking to the Ag industry and have expertise with Ag Service Businesses and their employees. With Agriculture being an economic staple of Kings County, it only makes sense to support the community, its business owners, as well as their employees. Agriculture in Kings County is one of the foundations of our community. Everyone in this community has a close friend or family member who is a farmer, a dairy farmer, or is employed in the industry. It is important for us to serve the communities we are in and provide access to financial services at affordable prices. We want to give back to the communities we serve. We want to understand the industry better to be a better financial partner.

We appreciate Valley Strong's Support and are grateful to have them as a part of our membership. If you would like to see all of the products and services Valley Strong Credit Union has to offer, visit them at [www.valleystrong.com](http://www.valleystrong.com)

*"Kings Fair" continued from page 1*

change. There will be two rounds of funding totaling \$89 million dollars and the Kings Fair is included in that first round. These funds will be distributed across the Network of California Fairs.

"Over 140 years ago, California began organizing one of the largest fair systems in the nation," Flores said. "It consists of 79 fairs that celebrate the diversity of California's abundant agriculture. While fairs are annual events, with the surplus of time and onsite resources, fairgrounds are adapting to their community's needs.

Today, fairgrounds are the foundation for resiliency centers, stepping up during emergencies to serve as evacuation sites for families, their pets and livestock."

Flores noted that fairground staffers must stand ready 365 days a year, and the Kings Fair is no different. He explained how it served the community during the pandemic and most recently during historic flooding in March.

"This investment will transform the fairgrounds and expand its capabilities for emergency preparedness and economic development," Flores said. "It will stand as a model that can be emulated at other fairgrounds."

On tap for the fairgrounds is a renovated, expanded and re-roofed Marketplace Building, two upgraded kitchen facilities and 60 new, short-term RV Park spaces with full



hookups. The Marketplace is the largest building in the county, and is identified as the best spot to quickly house the most people on a short-term basis in times of emergency.

Additionally, the improvements will benefit the community by providing better facilities for community events such as fundraisers, youth sports, wedding receptions or quinceaneras. This also will boost the rental income stream for the Kings Fair.

The RV hook-ups, limited to 14 days, will fill a daily request by tourists who are traveling through the area on Highway 198 on their way to the national parks, as well as families who need a place for relatives to stay during their visit to Kings County. Income from the RV Park is conservatively estimated at \$360,000 a year. In times of emergency, the area can easily be flipped to accommodate first responders.

Kings Fair CEO Dena Rizzardo is hopeful to break ground in 2024. She said the renovation process will be lengthy because as a state agency, all projects must be sent to bid and then approval.

"We are privileged to be receiving this money, and hopefully the community will appreciate and see what we are doing to improve the fairgrounds," she said.

# June 1st Thursday Night Marketplace: Dairy Appreciation Night

By Breanna Larman

June 1st Kings County Farm Bureau sponsored the Thursday Night Marketplace. Kicking off June dairy month in the community along side others from the industry at Dairy Appreciation Night to celebrate the leading commodity produced in Kings County. Several KCFB board of directors and the KCFB staff volunteered behind the bar serving drinks to marketplace goers. It was a great evening to celebrate the summer season, the dairy industry and a wonderful event in the community.



There was quite the crowd at the June 1st Thursday Night Marketplace. With a live band, dancing and KCFB serving drinks, it was a great summer night in downtown Hanford!



Executive Director Dusty Ference



Board of Director members John Ellis and Julie Martella, and the KCFB Board President Kevin Robertson. We are thankful to a board that is always willing to participate and volunteer at events.



Executive Director Dusty Ference and Board of Directors member Garrett Gilcrease volunteering behind the bar, serving drinks at the Marketplace beer garden.



*"Farmers Needed" continued from page 1*

grant funding. The program will fund the development of plans that will help farmers and ranchers identify actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, further environmental stewardship on farms and ranches and ensure agricultural food security into the future.

"We understand all of this resource conservation is going to happen on farms in Kings County and we want to be sure the farmers' best interests are kept in mind," said Dusty Ference, EKRCDC's general manager. Ference is also Kings County Farm Bureau's executive director and said proper management of the district is vital.

"Resource conservation districts are responsible for managing their natural resources," he said. "We wanted to manage this district in a way that was applicable and reasonable for the agricultural community it is serving."

Ference said the funding marks the first time in several years that the EKRCDC has received a state award, and is an important step in bringing the district back as it was all but defunct until a few years ago. It will also open the door to more grant opportunities in the future.

According to the application, EKRCDC and Sierra RCD have service areas in close proximity in Fresno and Kings counties, and are impacted by the same resource concerns. "A history of conventional agricultural practices and worsening drought conditions in the San Joaquin Valley have resulted in degraded agricultural soils and insecure water availability. Furthermore, as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) is implemented, many farmers in the San Joaquin Valley will be challenged anew."

Farmers interested in applying for soil health management plans will go through a two-step process. First, a plan will be written by a technical service provider (TSP) that will help a grower achieve soil health standards as outlined by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Second, site-specific recommendations for soil practices will be established, addressing issues such as soil compaction, loss of organic matter, salts and chemicals, plant productivity and wind erosion. Meeting these criteria increases the likelihood of receiving future state or federal grant funding.

Ference anticipates a lot of one-on-one calls and grower education.

"Farmers who understand how these grant work will be more inclined to participate," he said. "It's going to take some work but I don't see us having any trouble writing all the plans that we have been allocated." 🍷

## Ag Commissioner's Compliance Report



Jimmy Hook,  
Agricultural  
Commissioner/Sealer

## Agricultural Burning and the Abatement of Diseased Material

Contributed by Mario Gutierrez, Deputy Ag Commissioner/Sealer

Agricultural burning is the open burning of vegetative materials produced from commercial growing and harvesting of crops or raising fowl or animals. Agricultural burning also includes the use of open outdoor fires in the operation or maintenance of a system for the delivery of water, wild land burning, wildlife habitat improvement, forest management burning including silviculture and timber operations, and prescribed burning.

Agricultural Burning has traditionally been important to farmers, forest and wild land managers. Agricultural and residential burning is not prohibited under state law; however, authorities strictly regulate this activity. Responsible compliance with the rules for agricultural and open burning minimizes the impact on public health and helps to preserve the region. All burning requires a valid permit including agricultural (<https://tinyurl.com/y97wk4mu>)

Agricultural burning helps farmers remove crop residues left in the field after harvesting grains such as hay and rice, and for orchard and vineyard prunings and tree removal. Burning is also helpful in removing weeds, preventing disease, and controlling pests. For some crops including rice, burning is the most efficient and effective way to control disease. Burning for the purposes of abatement can only be used in very specific situations to eradicate, control or destroy a pest when there is no alternative as required (Food & Ag Code FAC 5403, 5404)

These exceptions may include burning of the small amount of agricultural material for which there are cogent disease issues, including agricultural commissioner- or State-ordered disease removals, or where there are safety or water quality issues that limit the use of pesticides. This agricultural material includes weeds and vegetative materials on rice field levees and banks; apple, pear, and quince crop prunings and orchard removals; weeds affecting ponding and levee banks;

and diseased beehives.

Exemptions to the California Air Resources Board Rule 4103 Open Burning, states "The burning of agricultural waste or crops pursuant to a lawful abatement order issued by the local county agricultural commissioner as described in Section 5403 and 5404 of the California Food and Agricultural Code." (CARB 4.1.5).

In 2003, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 705 which aimed to phase out open agricultural burning in the San Joaquin Valley. The phase out schedules for vineyard removals, orchard removals, and surface harvested pruning's are all structured to phase out burning for larger agricultural operations first, and will then gradually phase out burning for smaller operations. Due to unprecedented wildfires and stagnant winters with little precipitation, there may be significantly fewer opportunities to conduct burning. The District recommends all growers review the phase-out dates and consider alternatives to open burning as the prohibitions take effect. Please note that regardless of when materials have been removed and piled, authorization to burn will not be granted after the listed phase-out dates (<https://tinyurl.com/3a9nh48y>).

Permit holders requesting authorization to burn orchard and vineyard removal material are required to complete a vineyard or orchard removal application form available on the District website (<https://tinyurl.com/y97wk4mu>) under Forms and Applications. For other types of continued agricultural burning, burn permit holders are encouraged to use the automated smoke management system or the online portal when seeking burn authorization. Please be advised that in almost all instances, burn authorizations are for the crop type to be burned on that day and permit holders should report only the amount of material that will be burned on that day. Burn authorizations may be requested by telephone

by calling 1-800-665-2876 and clerks are available to help between 6:00 and 11:00 AM daily, and the automated system and internet portal (<http://sms.valleyair.org>) are available 24 hours a day.

In response to the near-complete phase-out of agricultural burning adopted by CARB and the District, the California Legislature appropriated \$180 million to CARB to grant to the District to support incentives for alternatives to agricultural burning in the Valley. The Ag Burn Alternatives Grant Program <https://tinyurl.com/3avub25d> provides incentives to commercial agricultural operations located within Valley Air District boundaries to chip or shred agricultural material.

For more information or any questions please contact the Kings County Department of Agriculture, (559) 852-2830 or [agstaff@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:agstaff@co.kings.ca.us). 🌱

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## 2023 Kings Fair Jr. Livestock Auction Grand Champions

by Blakeley Hittson



Carter Muir Supreme Champion Market Goat



Maddy Rodriguez Supreme Champion Poultry Meat Pen



Sophia Veenendaal Supreme Market Lamb



Matthew Temores Supreme Champion Market Hog



Wyatt Neff Supreme Champion Market Steer

Joseph Lugo Supreme Champion Rabbit Meat Pen



Trent Dutra Supreme Dairy Yearling Heifer



Landon Silva Supreme Dairy Replacement Heifer

## Ringside at the Auction

Photos by Breanna Larman



## Carnival

Photos by Payton Ryan at Fair-ly Decent Promotions





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# AG NEWS IN BRIEF

June 27, 2023, The Kings County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to open the Kings River for recreational use by landowners owning property on the river from the Kings County line downstream to the Lemoore Canal Company weir. Additionally, the Board voted to open the river for recreational use where public access is permitted between the Lemoore Canal Company weir and the Empire Weir Number Two. At the same meeting, the Board considered introducing and waving the first reading of a proposed change to the County's ordinance assessing property values. If adopted, the ordinance change will allow the County Assessor to reassess property damaged or destroyed by misfortune or calamity. The Assessor currently possesses the ability to reassess property value under these conditions but updating the ordinance with streamline the process and allow the County to act more quickly in these unfortunate situations. The second reading of the ordinance will happen in mid to late July.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff is working on potential amendments to the current Tier 4 off-road diesel engine

standards to create an Off-Road New Diesel Engine Tier 5 standard, according to the posted agenda for the public workgroup meeting on June 27, 2023. If that isn't tough enough on California businesses, in June, CARB approved a regulation requiring zero-emission engines in all medium and heavy-duty trucks sold in California in 2036. If this sounds familiar, it is. In 2020 CARB mandated that half the truck sales in California met zero-emission standards.

Groundwater sustainability plans for six groundwater basins were deemed "inadequate" in March 2023 by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and referred to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) as outlined under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). After reviewing the deficiencies, SWRCB staff scheduled probationary hearings for each basin as follows; Tulare Lake – December 2023, Tule – January 2024, Kaweah – March 2024, Kern April 2024, Delta-Mendota – September 2024, and Chowchilla – October 2024. 📄

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# Upcoming Events By Breanna Larman

*How many golfers does it take to change a light bulb?*

*Fore!*

We have an exciting fall coming up with our members this year. We have started planning our 2023 Harvest Classic Golf Tournament at Kings Country Club (KCCC) in October and our new and improved Annual Meeting at Carnegie Museum in November.


Grab your clubs and 3 friends to play in our annual golf tournament on October 30th or enter as an individual and be partnered up with other community members. Try your luck at the Blackjack, longest drive, closest to the pin or Vegas hole to win cash and prizes, or just meet us at the newly remodeled KCCC café for cocktail hour after lunch.

Want a magical night out at a historic venue, with local food and a great auction? Look no further, we have the event for you. KCFB is hosting our Annual Meeting on November 16th at the Carnegie Museum in downtown Hanford. Built in 1905 as a library, then reopened as a museum in 1975 the Carnegie Museum couldn't be a more perfect venue for such an event. Only 120 tickets are available so make sure to claim your tickets as soon as they are available.

If you are interested in buying tickets, sponsoring, or volunteering at any of these events please contact Breanna at the KCFB office by phone at 559-584-3557 or by email at [blarman@kcfb.org](mailto:blarman@kcfb.org).



Carnegie Museum

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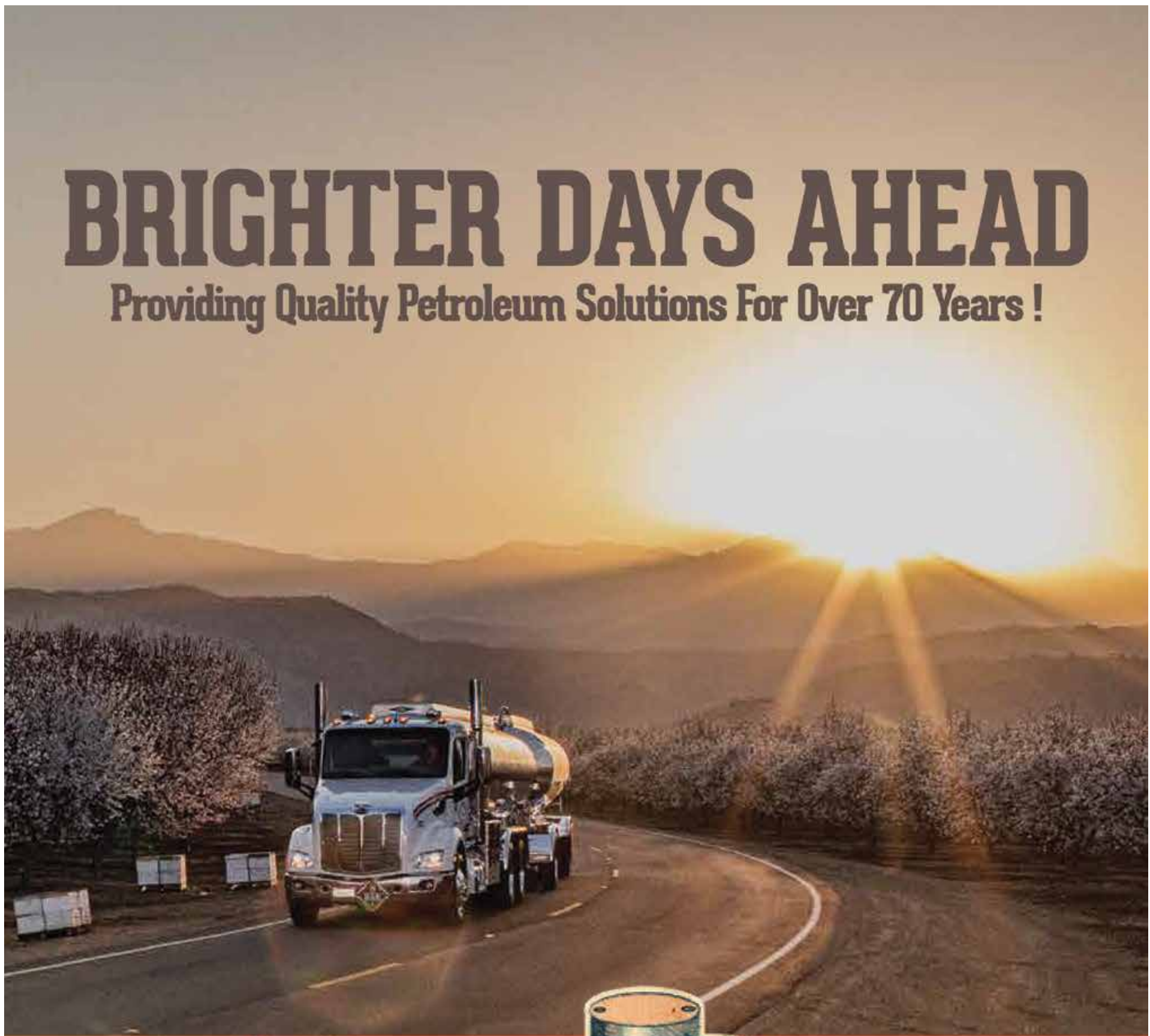
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# Kings County Rural Crime Report

Contributed by Detective Dakotah Fausnett

The Kings County Sheriff's Office Rural Crime Task Force is currently conducting several investigations. Throughout the month of June, the Kings County Rural Crimes Task Force has continued to be busy in the southwest end of the county regarding copper, and ATV thefts.

Copper wire thefts as well as valve thefts are staying steady. Regarding wire thefts, they are very difficult to investigate because the theft is done in the middle of the night and they're typically discovered by a worker which is then reported at a later time. By the time we receive the call, half a dozen people and vehicles have walked over or driven over the scene, destroying evidence such as a shoe or tire impressions left by the suspects. This makes it difficult to solve. We are currently setting up trail cameras at these locations in an effort to obtain any additional leads and deter crime.

Keenan Farms fell victim to the theft of a John Deere Gator and a Polaris Ranger. Two individuals broke the lock to the gate and accessed the equipment yard last night. The suspects then stole the John Deere Gator and Polaris and left heading westbound on Plymouth Ave. We are currently working on obtaining video surveillance which captured the suspects and the suspect's vehicle.

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. If you have any questions feel free to call me or any of our unit members at any time. 🙌



Detective Fausnett : (559) 639-8704  
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