

**INSIDE**COMMON THREADS
AWARDS PG. 4

KCFB is gearing up for the 2023 legislative season

By Dusty Ference, Executive Director

February is always an exciting month around KCFB. Inspired by the World Ag Expo and the influential people it brings to the Valley, this year's event seemed busier than most. The week started with a luncheon organized by the Western Growers Association, which hosted House Ag Committee Chairman Glenn "G.T." Thompson (R-PA-15) and agriculture organizations from throughout California. Chairman Thompson was in California to discuss this year's Farm Bill and to better understand our state's agriculture needs from the bill.



During last month's World Ag Expo, Western Growers Association hosted House Ag Committee Chairman Glenn "G.T." Thompson and agriculture organizations from throughout California for a discussion on what California ag producers hope to see in the next Farm Bill. Photo courtesy of Western Growers Association

Tracey Chow, federal government affairs director for Western Growers Association, said "we are confident that the collective comments from the group left a strong impression with the chairman as to the important challenges and opportunities for the state's ag industry."

The next day, Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy (R-CA-20) hosted a Farm Bill listening session at the World Ag "2023 Legislative Season" continued on page 7

New CEO making plans to turn Kings Fair around

By Amy D. Fienen

The 2023 Kings Fair is scheduled for June 15 to 18, and new CEO Dena Rizzardo is hoping to breathe new life into the popular community event. Work is already being done to clean up the fairgrounds, and the entertainment for this year's fair has been booked.

"We want to turn the fair around and get the community more involved," Rizzardo said. "We're working to make the facility profitable and maintained in good condition."

Rizzardo was hired as the CEO of the Tulare fair in 2020, and as the result of an interagency agreement for the Tulare Fair to staff the Kings Fair, she was named CEO of our local fair in January of this year.

Rizzardo relocated to Visalia from Siskiyou County in 2020, where she was heavily involved in the county fair and sat on their board for 10 years. She started showing livestock for 4-H when she was only 5, and continued to do so through high school in both 4-H and FFA.

She spent 20 years working in the banking industry, starting in a part-time entry-level position and working her way into credit administration. Fair operations and a change of scenery were a welcome change, and Rizzardo said her experience in finance, politics and compliance have all transferred over to her role in fair operations.

Looking to the year ahead, Rizzardo's immediate goals are to host more

"Kings Fair CEO" continued on page 2



Dena Rizzardo



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Executive Director

Dusty Ference
dusty.ference@kcfb.org

Farm Life Editorial

Amy Fienen
afienen@kcfb.org

Farm Life Advertising

Dusty Ference
kcfb@kcfb.org
(559) 584-3557

Farm Life Designer

Beth Greene

CFBF District Representative

Brian Medeiros

Contact

870 Greenfield Ave., Hanford, CA 93230
Phone: (559) 584-3557
www.kcfb.org



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Kings County considers changes to hemp ordinance

By Dusty Ference, Executive Director



Dusty Ference

The County of Kings held a study session Feb. 28 on proposed changes to the ordinance regulating industrial hemp cultivation initially adopted on Oct. 20, 2020. Suggested changes up for consideration impact practices for fiber and oilseed production only. According to the proposal, approved cultivars of hemp grown for fiber and oilseed in densely populated planting do not warrant the same restrictions as varieties grown for high - THC or cannabinoids.

Concerns over public safety, odor and threats to neighboring crops are diminished when growing under these proposed changes because industrial hemp is typically harvested before the emergence of flowers which are the source of odor and THC.

Defined to mean planting 20 pounds of seed per acre if planted in rows, with spacing not exceeding 18 inches, "densely planted" fields will have a legal definition and be easily recognizable if the ordinance passes.

A study session is the first step in adopting any ordinance by the Board of Supervisors. During the meeting on Feb. 28, the county held a hearing and waived the first reading of the proposed ordinance. A public hearing is an opportunity for the public to comment on the rule for consideration. No comments were submitted during this hearing. The second reading and vote determining adoption were scheduled for Tuesday, March 7 at 9 a.m. KCFB will continue to monitor the ordinance's progress and update our members on any changes. 🗳️



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"Kings Fair CEO" continued from page 1

events at the fairgrounds, invest in infrastructure, clean up the grounds, and bring exciting entertainment and a cleaner carnival to this summer's Kings Fair.

To that end, the 2023 Kings Fair will feature a live shark encounter, the Silver Starlets aerial acrobatic show, JUMP! The Ultimate Dog Show, Captain Jack Spareribs, and bands that include Journey Revisited, Josh Day and 82 Deluxe.

The Kings Fair was cancelled in 2020 and '21, and attendance was down last year. Rizzardo hopes this year's line-up will draw people back to the fair and reignite excitement for an event that represents the county's small town feel and deep agricultural roots. 🗳️

WATER NEWS

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DWR RELEASES DECISIONS FOR MANAGEMENT PLANS IN CRITICALLY OVERDRAFTED BASINS

On March 2, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced decisions for groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) for 12 critically overdrafted groundwater basins in Central California. These plans provide a roadmap for how groundwater basins will reach long-term sustainability, while implementing near-term actions such as expanding monitoring programs, reporting annually on groundwater conditions, implementing groundwater recharge projects and designing allocation programs.

Of the 12, plans for six basins are recommend for approval with recommended corrective actions for the basins to remain in an approved status. The remaining six basins are deemed inadequate and are transitioning from DWR's oversight to the State Water Board for State intervention under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Adopted in 2014, SGMA requires local groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) in medium- and high-priority groundwater basins, which includes 21 critically overdrafted basins, to develop and implement GSPs.

DWR recommends approval of plans for the following

basins:

- Cuyama Basin in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Ventura and Kern counties
- Paso Robles Subbasin in San Luis Obispo County
- Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin in San Joaquin County
- Merced Subbasin in Merced County
- Westside Subbasin in Fresno and Kings counties
- Kings Subbasin in Fresno County

DWR deemed the following basin plans inadequate:

- Chowchilla Subbasin in Madera and Merced counties
- Delta-Mendota Subbasin in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Madera, and San Benito counties
- Kaweah Subbasin in Tulare and Kings counties
- Tule Subbasin in Tulare County
- Tulare Lake Subbasin in Kings County
- Kern Subbasin in Kern County

GSAs are required to begin implementing their plans as soon as they are adopted locally, and these activities

will continue even if basins are under state intervention. These plans will help local agencies address conditions that negatively impact groundwater within 20 years, such as groundwater overdraft, degraded groundwater quality, land subsidence, and impacts to drinking water well users.

The GSAs whose plans are recommended for approval conducted critical analysis of groundwater levels, water quality and inter-connected surface waters to develop and refine sustainable groundwater management criteria. While additional analytical work is needed during implementation, DWR deemed the framework for management sufficient under the law.

“Since the onset of SGMA, local agencies have stepped up with dedication and progress in meeting critical milestones,” said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. “Protecting domestic wells, minimizing land subsidence

"Water News" continued on page 7



March 16th Kings Fairgrounds

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Kings County women honored with Common Threads Award

Three Kings County women were honored with a Common Threads Award during a special luncheon on March 1. A collaborative effort of Ag Leadership, Fresno State's Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology and the Ag One Foundation, the Common Threads Award honors women for their contributions to agriculture and philanthropic stewardship. Three of the seven recipients are from Hanford: Aubrey Bettencourt, Sheri Kanagawa and Holly Rosa. Additional recipients are Juanita Calzadillas-Pedrozo of Merced, Lucy Areias of Fresno, Nanette Simonian of Fresno and Tricia Stever Blatter, executive director of Tulare County Farm Bureau.

Congratulations to our local winners, and thank you for representing Kings County agriculture so well.



Aubrey Bettencourt

Aubrey Bettencourt is a fourth-generation Kings County farmer and an advocate and policy advisor for the ag industry. She was nominated by her friend and colleague, Christina Musson-Rendon.

Aubrey has been the president and CEO of the Almond Alliance of California since 2021. She was previously the director of sustainability for Western United Dairymen, where she focused on watershed health and other natural-resource issues for the dairy industry. Before that, she worked in Washington, D.C. as deputy assistant secretary in the Water and Science Division of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

From 2017-19, Aubrey was the California state director of USDA's Farm Service Agency, and from 2009-17, she served as the executive director of the California Water Alliance. In that role, she successfully led a statewide initiative to approve the Prop 1 water bill to fund additional water storage and infrastructure improvements. She's also involved with the operation of Bettencourt Family Farms in Hanford, which includes a dairy, almonds and a pumpkin patch.

Aubrey is known throughout the ag industry as a leading educational voice, an authority on water issues, and an expert in strategically leading and developing policy at all levels. She is a former Kings County Farm Bureau director, and



This year's Common Threads Award recipients, left to right: Tulare County Farm Bureau Executive Director Tricia Stever Blatter, Aubrey Bettencourt, Nanette Simonian, Lucy Areias, Holly Rosa, Sheri Kanagawa and Jaunita Calzadillas-Pedrozo. Photo courtesy of Debbie Raven

supports a number of other local organizations with her time and talents.

Musson-Rendon describes Aubrey as "a brilliant Visionary leader that is optimistic and passionate about ag's future in every way. Her innate ability to bridge all spectrums of the regulatory conundrum make her a valuable ally to both agriculture and the environment. As a farmer herself, she seeks clear, efficient opportunities and solutions to all the challenges facing farming, rural communities and the environment."



Sheri Kanagawa

Sheri Kanagawa was nominated by her mom, Lil Draxler. Sheri grew up on her family's Hanford dairy, giving dairy tours, picking grapes and helping out wherever she was needed. She was a 4-H member from fourth grade through her senior year of high school, and as an adult, spent 25 years as a leader, shepherding her children and grandchildren through the program.

During her time as a kindergarten and first grade teacher in Kings County, Sheri stressed the importance of agriculture to her students, showing them the many ways they were connected to ag through the food they ate and clothes they wore. Additionally, she joined her husband, Floyd, in his family's business, Sanger Nursery.

In her nomination letters, Sheri is described as someone who loves to use her skills for the benefit and empowerment of others.

Sheri has volunteered her time supporting Catholic Daughters of America, Habit for Humanity, Helping Other Women, Days for Girls, CASA, and a number of other community causes.

Lil Draxler wrote that her daughter's respect for others and demonstrated integrity in working with both children and adults are some of Sheri's strongest attributes.

"She naturally gives of herself to those in need, leads in organizations in which she is involved, and uses her creativity to inspire others to also volunteer in the community," Draxler wrote. "Above all, Sheri is driven by her generous, faith-inspired beliefs which are instilled in her heart and soul."



Holly Rosa

Holly Rosa was nominated by her husband, Noel Rosa. Together, the couple has worked to grow the family dairy business into a very successful enterprise.

Holly grew up on a dairy farm near Waukena in Tulare County and attended Tulare Western High School. She graduated from CSU Fresno in 1994 with a degree in business administration and a concentration in accounting. Initially, Holly worked for an accounting firm that specialized in pistachio farming and processing. Later, she specialized in dairy accounting and is currently responsible for business operations





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Ag Commissioner's Compliance Report



Jimmy Hook,
Agricultural
Commissioner/Sealer

How the Ag Commissioner enforces incorrect CRV chargers by retailers

Contributed by Mario Gutierrez, Deputy Ag Commissioner/Sealer

Most of us have heard the term California Redemption Value, or CRV. Items for sale subject to CRV usually state CRV is in addition to the stated advertised price or “plus CRV.” Our office has received complaints from consumers who were charged CRV on items not subject to CRV, and until recently, this type of overcharge by a retailer was not enforceable under the Business and Professions Code (B&P Code).

Consumers in California pay CRV when they purchase beverages from a retailer. But not all beverage containers are subject to CRV. Most beverages packaged in aluminum, glass, plastic, and bi-metal containers are eligible for CRV. Eligible containers include beer and malt beverages, wine coolers and distilled spirit coolers, carbonated and noncarbonated fruit drinks, water, and soft drinks. One-hundred percent fruit juice less than 46 oz., vegetable juice 16 oz. or less, and sports drinks are also covered. The containers not eligible for CRV include milk, medical food, infant formula, wine, spirits, 100% fruit juice 46 oz. or more, 100% vegetable juice more than 16 oz. plus food and other non-beverage containers. CRV is five cents for each beverage container less

than 24 ounces and 10 cents for each container 24 ounces or greater. Weights and measures officials have observed CRV being charged improperly for such items as milk, vegetable cooking oil, tomato soup, and individual Twinkies.

Cal Recycle, officially known as the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, administers the California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act. B&P Code Section 12024.13 does specify a dealer of a beverage container shall not charge an amount for a redemption payment for a beverage container that is greater than the amount set fourth and a violation of 12024.13 did occur if a retailer charged greater than the five and 10 cents allowed. This infraction is punishable by a fine of not more than \$100 when the overcharge is one dollar or less, but if our office receives a complaint for overcharges on items not subject to the CRV act, we were only able to provide education to the consumer and retailer, but the overcharge was not a violation of B&P Code 12024.2.

Section 12024.2 (a)(2) states: It is unlawful for any person, at the time of sale of a commodity, to do any of the following: Charge an amount greater

than the lowest price posted on the commodity itself or on a shelf tag that corresponds to the commodity, notwithstanding any limitation of the time period for which the posted price is in effect.

As part of the act, consumers pay CRV when they purchase beverages from a retailer and receive CRV refunds when they redeem the containers at a recycling center. Broken down into its elements, the Division of Measurement Standards (DMS) did not interpret CRV as part of an overcharge on an item for this code section. When a retailer charged a consumer CRV on an item not subject to the act, the addition of the CRV technically was not part of the posted price of the commodity itself.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture Legal Counsel has provided further interpretation and a recent DMS Notice QC-23-01 provides clarification on enforcement of B&P Code 12024.2 (a)(2). In short, yes, a violation of B&P Code 12024.2 (a)(2) appears to be a valid charge levied on vendors who incorrectly charge CRV on commodities not subject to CRV surcharges. To determine if it was possible, legal counsel considered three definitions in the code section. It was determined vendors would be considered a “person” and they “sell” various commodities to consumers. B&P Code 12024.2 applies because the business is charging an amount that is greater than the price “posted on a commodity itself or on a shelf tag that corresponds to the commodity.” Based on the assumption that CRV is not included in the posted price, then any CRV applied to that item when purchased is an amount that is “greater than the lowest price posted.”

So based on the clarification, now if our office receives a complaint from consumer who was charged CRV on items not subject to CRV, this type of overcharge by a retailer is enforceable under the Business and Professions Code 12024.2 (a)(2) and our weights and measures inspectors can take the appropriate action to correct the violation. Should you have any questions or comments please contact our office at (559) 852-2830. 📞

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“Water News” continued from page 3

and protecting groundwater resources are all state priorities. Implementation of these plans, which will require difficult adjustments as we go, will ultimately provide a safe and reliable groundwater supply for communities for generations to come.”

The basins deemed inadequate by DWR did not appropriately address deficiencies in how GSAs structured their sustainable management criteria. The management criteria provide an operating range for how groundwater levels prevent undesirable effects such as overdraft, land subsidence and groundwater levels that may impact drinking water wells, within 20 years. These GSAs did not analyze and justify continued groundwater level declines and land subsidence. Further, the GSPs lacked a clear understanding of how the management criteria may cause undesired effects on groundwater users in the basins or critical infrastructure.

In January 2022, after technical evaluation, DWR found the plans in these 12 critically overdrafted basins to be incomplete, identifying significant deficiencies that precluded approval. The GSAs had 180 days to correct the deficiencies and revise and resubmit their plans to DWR for re-evaluation, consistent with the regulations. The basins with plans recommended for approval will continue to work with DWR and report on their progress in implementing their plans and completing corrective actions. The ultimate goal is to have all basins return to local management with a clear path on how to achieve sustainability within 20 years of their original plan submittal.

Out of a total of 94 groundwater basins required to submit plans under SGMA, DWR has provided determinations for 24 basins and is currently reviewing an additional 61 plans from 59 of the state’s high- and medium- priority basins that were submitted to DWR in January 2022. DWR anticipates issuing determinations for the remaining basins throughout 2023. 📧

“2023 Legislative Season” continued from page 1

Expo. Moderated by Thompson, members of the committee who joined McCarthy included Doug Lamalfa (R-CA-01), John Duarte (R-CA-13), Jim Costa (D-CA-21), and Salud Carbajal (D-CA-24), along with non-committee members David Valadao (R-CA-22) and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-19). Growers, ag organizations, and food bank representatives commented on the Farm Bill’s value and encouraged funding for nutrition, crop insurance, pest and disease research, and increasing trade.

Now that the dust has settled on statewide elections in California, KCFB has spoken to and planned meetings with state elected officials Assemblymember Devon Mathis and State Senator Melissa Hurtado. KCFB’s board of directors has identified a few bills troubling agriculture and has started conversations about them. The deadline to introduce bills for this year was Friday, Feb. 17, so we are early in the legislative season. KCFB will update its members on these bills as the season progresses.

Locally, in December of 2022, the Kings County Board of Supervisors passed Ordinance No. 706ordinance, adding chapter 14C, governing the extraction of groundwater for use outside of Kings County, to the Kings County Code of Ordinances. To address some of the concerns presented by the public, the Board of Supervisors tasked the county’s water commission with providing a proposal highlighting preferable language changes in the ordinance. A report from the commission is due this month. If changes are adopted, we will update our members in a future issue of “Farm Life.”

This year’s legislative session is ramping up and will be full of bills challenging agriculture. KCFB is working diligently to monitor those bills and keep them at the forefront of discussions among growers and elected officials. 📧

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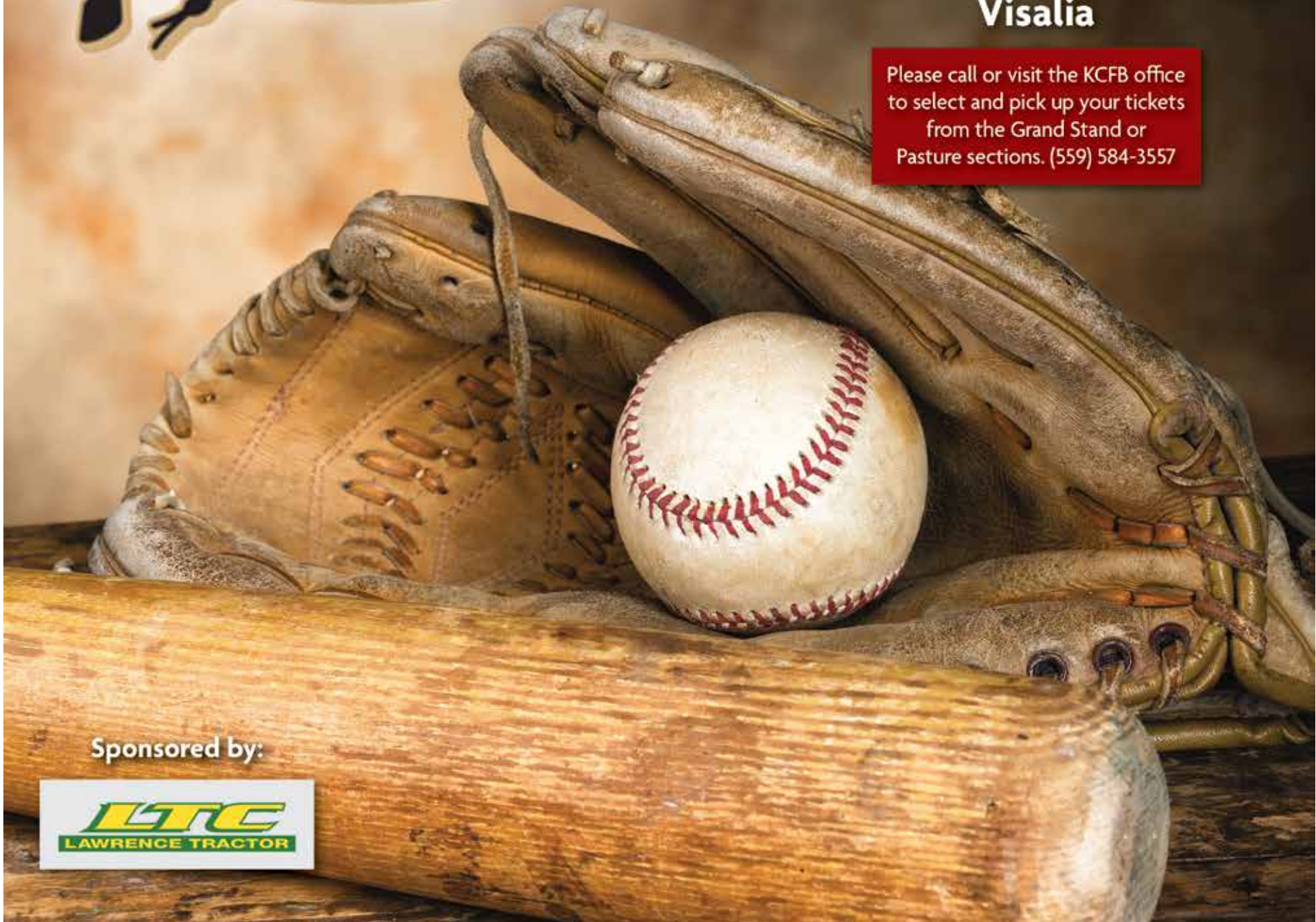


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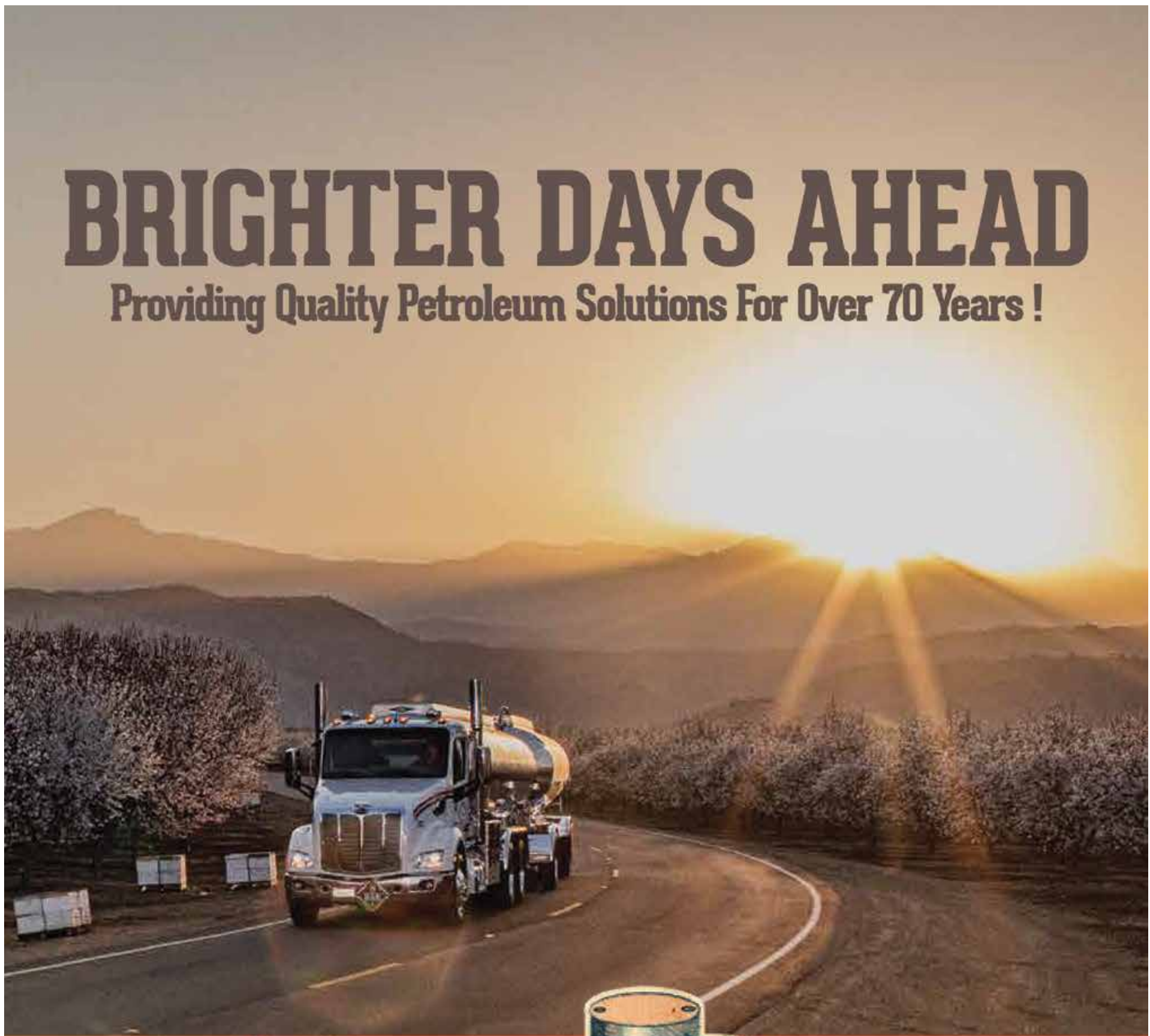
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Kings County Rural Crime Report

Beware of fraudulent loan billing statements

Contributed by James Coghlan, Ag Detective

Throughout the month of February, the Kings County Rural Crimes Task Force was busy throughout the county regarding copper, hay, beehive, and diesel fuel thefts.

We were able to track down a stolen John Deere tractor owned by Hansen Farms that was stolen back in January. The tractor was recovered in Fresno County, and we are working alongside the Fresno County Sheriff's Office to identify the suspects who stole it.

We are currently working with the FBI regarding a fraud case with Tos Farms. No money was taken from Tos Farms; however, a "Covid relief loan" was taken out in their name for \$130,000 that did not require payments for 30 months. The 30 months expired this month and Tos Farms received the first billing statement for the fraudulent loan. We are expecting to see more and more of these kinds of fraudulent loans come to light as we are reaching the end of the 30-month timeframe for these kinds of loans. If you receive any suspicious requests for payments regarding a loan you did not take out, please call and report it to the Sheriff's Office or your local law enforcement agency.

Our patrol interrupted a cock fighting ring in the area of 18th and Kent avenues. We are still investigating the event which consisted of over 200 birds, and currently have over a dozen suspects identified.



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Detective Thomas: (559) 530-1701
Detective Holt: (559) 362-8928
Detective Coghlan: (559) 362-3078

It is imperative that if anyone knows of or hears of anyone buying or selling obviously stolen equipment to call the sheriff's office. If we do not receive calls from our Farm Bureau 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. 📞

"Common Threads" continued from page 4

for the family business, Rosa Brothers.

Noel and his brother Rolland took over their parents' dairy in 1998, and in 2012, they started Rosa Brothers, their own dairy processing facility. Holly took on the role of business manager for Rosa Brothers, as well as the dairy and farm. Rosa Brothers started as a small creamery with just five employees, and in 10 years, has expanded to 45-employee business that produces a number of specialty dairy products. Holly has handled the business operations while raising four children and supporting local ag organizations like 4-H, FFA and Kings County Dairywomen. Her involvement in the family business is a key reason Rosa Brothers has been so successful to date, Nolan said.

And while the family business is important, it's not her first priority. Nolan said this about Holly in his nomination form:

"Holly's Christian faith defines who she is and why she does what she does. Her focus in life is to serve others. In every commitment, she lives to serve to the best of her ability but with a humble heart. However, with all her activities, her most successful legacy is being a mother committed to the well-being of her children. Holly teaches her kids to be independent. She is supportive but allows them to make mistakes and learn from their own decisions. The most important wisdom that she has imparted to them is that God comes first, followed by family." 📞



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