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Feds announce zero percent water allocation for Valley farmers

By Amy D. Fienen

In a huge blow to Valley farmers, the federal government announced a zero percent water allocation on Feb. 23. The announcement comes on the heels of a devastatingly dry start to the year. As we enter what looks to be another year of drought, farmers will once again be faced with the difficult task of growing crops without water.

The Bureau of Reclamation said this year's low allocations are an indicator of the third consecutive dry year California is experiencing and will be updated if conditions warrant. The announcement affects Westlands Water District and other south-of-Delta Central Valley Project (CVP) irrigation contractors, and marks the fourth time in 10 years the south-of-Delta irrigation contractors have received a zero percent allocation.

Westlands Water District said they are disappointed with the allocation but are aware that hydrologic conditions, including low CVP reservoir storage conditions at the beginning of the water year and record low precipitation in



"Water Allocation" continued on page 11

Scholarship applications are due this month

By Amy D. Fienen

Kings County Farm Bureau has long been a proud supporter of agriculture education, and invests in the industry's future leaders by awarding scholarships to graduating high school seniors each year. This year, KCFB will be awarding their own scholarships to qualified seniors, while also managing two additional scholarships.

Since the start of KCFB's scholarship program in 2007, the organization has awarded more than \$100,000 to deserving students. Scholarships are awarded to qualified students who plan to further their education at a two- or four-year accredited college, university or vocational institute and pursue a career in agriculture. The recipients are selected based on academic achievement, extracurricular activities, determination, leadership skills and a commitment to a career in agriculture.

KCFB also manages and awards the Environmental Oversight Committee Scholarship and the Victoria A. Mueller Memorial Scholarship. Requirements, recommendations and information on how to apply for all three scholarships are available on page 8. The deadline for applications is March 16. 🐾



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Please help! Farm Day volunteers desperately needed

By Dusty Ference, Executive Director



Dusty Ference

Recently I heard the term "Great Resignation" and had to ask what it meant. Come to find out, it is a term used to describe the millions of Americans leaving their jobs in the past several months. It appears there are several factors responsible for the phenomenon, from going someplace new for higher wages to working in locations where employees feel they are less likely to contract COVID, or just deciding not to work. It seems that no industry or place is immune from these resignations.

When I am talking with KCFB members and industry partners, one of their biggest concerns is a lack of staff and not finding people to replace employees that have left. Employers' concerns are mounting, and not just over getting work done in their businesses. Employers are worried about the long-term effects on the economy and community.

KCFB relies on the community to help with programs and events like the Wine vs. Beer Showdown and Farm Day. This year, Farm Day will have fewer students in attendance than the previous event held in 2019. More troubling than educating fewer students despite the growing population is the struggle we face getting presenters and volunteers this year.

Many of the people that have helped in years past tell us how disappointed they are that they cannot support us this year because they don't have enough help. Farm Day will be about two weeks away by the time you read this. Please let us know if you or someone you know would like to offer a presentation to third-graders or help them transplant lettuce to take home. Without a strong showing from the community, the future of Farm Day hangs in the balance. 🍷

wine vs. beer
Showdown

KCFB
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Thursday, March 31
Tickets \$40
kcfb.org/winevbeer

Hanford Civic Auditorium 5:30-8:30 pm 21 & over
Sponsors: Kings County Farm Bureau • JC Lansdowne Inc. • Golden State Farm Credit

Presenting the 2022 Wine vs. Beer Showdown

We're pleased to introduce the food, wine and beer vendors that will be featured at our **March 31st Wine vs. Beer Showdown.**

Food/Non-Alcohol Vendors

- Raven's Deli
- Chef Gray, LLC
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- Giacomazzi Brothers Nut Company
- Off the Vine
- Keanu's Hawaiian BBQ
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L.T. Sue Co.



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- Hop Forged Brewing Company
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- OK3 Brewery
- Firestone Walker



Wine Vendors

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- Golden State Farm Credit
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- One Hope Wine
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Ag Commissioner's Compliance Report



Jimmy Hook,
Agricultural
Commissioner/Sealer

Protecting the consumer at the gas pump

Contributed by Mario Gutierrez, Deputy Ag Commissioner/Sealer

The Kings County Office of Weights and Measures is responsible for the enforcement of weights and measures laws and regulations in California. In the Device Enforcement Program, every year the Kings County Department of Measurement Standards (Department) performs inspections at the 69 retail motor fuel locations (gas stations) in the county checking the accuracy of the motor fuel dispensers, as well as making sure petroleum signage meets the requirements of the State of California. Look for a round seal on all commercial devices, including retail motor fuel dispensers, indicating when county staff inspected the device.

Inspections of gas stations in Kings County are unannounced and random throughout the year. Department staff test motor fuel dispensers by dispensing five gallons of fuel from each available grade at the pump into a five-gallon test standard. We use two different types of five-gallon standards. One, mounted on a petroleum prover trailer is capable of holding up to 110 gallons each of three grades of gasoline. This allows staff to check



Dispensing into a five-gallon Seraphin Test Measure

up to 66 fuel meters at one location before having to return the fuel to the storage tanks. Inspectors will also use a standalone five-gallon test measure (bucket) called a Seraphin Test Measure to test fuel dispensers. The buckets are used at stations our prover trailer has difficulty to access. Keep in mind that one motor fuel dispenser with three grades of gasoline require three tests, and an additional test if diesel is sold, because each grade is control by separate meters.

So how accurate are the pumps? On each five-gallon test, the allowed tolerance is plus or minus six cubic inches. Six cubic inches equals about 3.3 fluid ounces, a little less than ½ cup. As long as the amount of fuel pumped into the five-gallon test measure is within 3.3 ounces, the fuel dispenser is within tolerance and receives a county seal of inspection.

The Department will test over 1,600 fuel meters in the county each year, only a handful will be out of tolerance. The majority of annually inspected pumps are actually dispensing gas a little in favor of the customer. Pumps found out of compliance are immediately taken out of use and secured with a lead and wire seal, preventing use until repaired by a license service agent.

Checking the price signs and dispenser labeling is the second component of our inspection of gas stations. The Petroleum Product

Program enforces laws and regulations dealing with motor fuel advertising. Gas stations are required to post the price of the motor fuel that they sell. The signs must be visible to motorists before entering the station to purchase fuel. The placement of the signage, the size of the lettering, and the illumination of the display all play an important role in helping consumers decide on their purchase and must meet the minimum California specifications. Inspected is the proper markings on the pumps, including fuel prices, octane rating, brand, and grade, as well as the postings notifying customers of the availability of free air, water and disabled driver services. Additional automotive products, such as coolant/anti-freeze, brake fluid, motor oil, and other lubricants are also inspected to assure they meet minimum Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) labeling specifications.

Have you heard of illegally installed skimmers? Payment card skimmers are devices installed in credit/debit card readers by criminals capable of stealing your card information. Skimmers continue to be a problem in the retail motor fuel industry. Inspection staff are able to check inside the dispensers to look for these devices. The service agents who repair the dispensers are also required to notify the Department if they come across such a device while working on them.

The programs enforced by the Department are responsible for reducing errors in commercial transactions through regular inspections and testing of commercial devices such as retail motor fuel dispensers. When you happen upon Department inspection staff performing these inspections at gas stations in Kings County, feel free to stop and ask about their work. We are always willing to help you understand the role our Department



This test shows two cubic inches on the plus side

Volunteers Needed



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FARM DAY

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County Superintendent of Schools

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March 17, 2022 Kings Fairgrounds



For more information please contact Kings County Office of Education:
Ruth McFarren: (559) 589-7056 ruth.mcfarren@kingscoe.org
or Kings County Farm Bureau (559) 584-3557

"Gas Pump" continued on page 5

Member to Member *People, Products, Prosperity*

Stifel Investment Services

By Amy D. Fienen

Sandra Hedstrom Wheeler, vice president of investments at Stifel Investment Services, has strong ties to Valley agriculture, and wants to use her 26 years of experience to help farmers and agribusinesses achieve their financial goals.



Born and raised in Visalia, Hedstrom graduated from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. She began her career as a financial advisor in Visalia in 1995, growing a large client base in the Valley and throughout the state. She transferred to San Luis Obispo in 2006, where she works for Stifel Investment Services, one of the country's most respected financial services firms.

Hedstrom works primarily with families, small business owners and non-profits, but also specializes in providing investment management services for special districts and cities throughout California. She uses a personal and customized approach to help her clients build, manage, protect and transfer wealth.

"My job is to seek ways to mitigate risk, create strategies that are designed to preserve wealth, and help clients transfer that wealth in the most tax-efficient manner possible," Hedstrom said. "I focus on developing customized strategies that seek to generate income with a reasonable return."

Whether it's succession planning, estate planning or asset management, Hedstrom delivers a personalized approach. Due to her vast experience at large corporate firms in the past, she appreciates that Stifel, a stand-alone boutique firm with a national presence, allows her to foster relationships, work closely with her clients, and provide the support and service they require.

"At Stifel, you're not just another client," Hedstrom said. "My mission is to provide every client with targeted, comprehensive financial guidance and wealth management delivered with outstanding professional service and personal integrity."

Stifel Investment Services is a new silver-level Friend of Farm Bureau. Agriculture has been an important part of Hedstrom's life, she said, and she would welcome the opportunity to help Kings County agriculturalists secure their financial futures.

"My roots are in the Valley," Hedstrom said. "I love agriculture at heart and want to stay connected to home."

You can learn more about Sandra Hedstrom Wheeler and Stifel Investment Services at sandrahedstromwheeler.com. She can be reached at (805) 903-1065 or sandra.wheeler@stifel.com. 📧

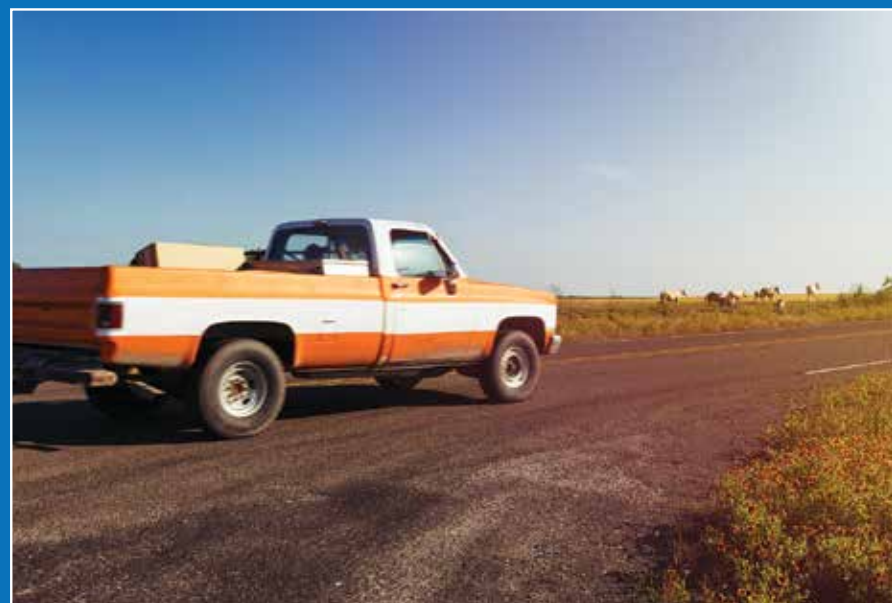
continued from page 4

fills in protecting the consumer.

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presented by KCFB & Nationwide



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- **English: 10-11:30 a.m., Spanish: 1-2:30 p.m.**
- **Limited seating is available for this in-person training. Call the KCFB office at (559) 584-3557 or email kcfb@kcfb.org to register.**
- **Free for members / \$50 for non-members**

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 Follow us on Facebook at Young Farmers & Ranchers of Kings County

Young Farmers and Ranchers is a subcommittee of Farm Bureau, for agriculturalists between the ages of 18-35. It's a great way to develop leadership skills, participate in social activities, promote legislative awareness and learn more about agriculture.

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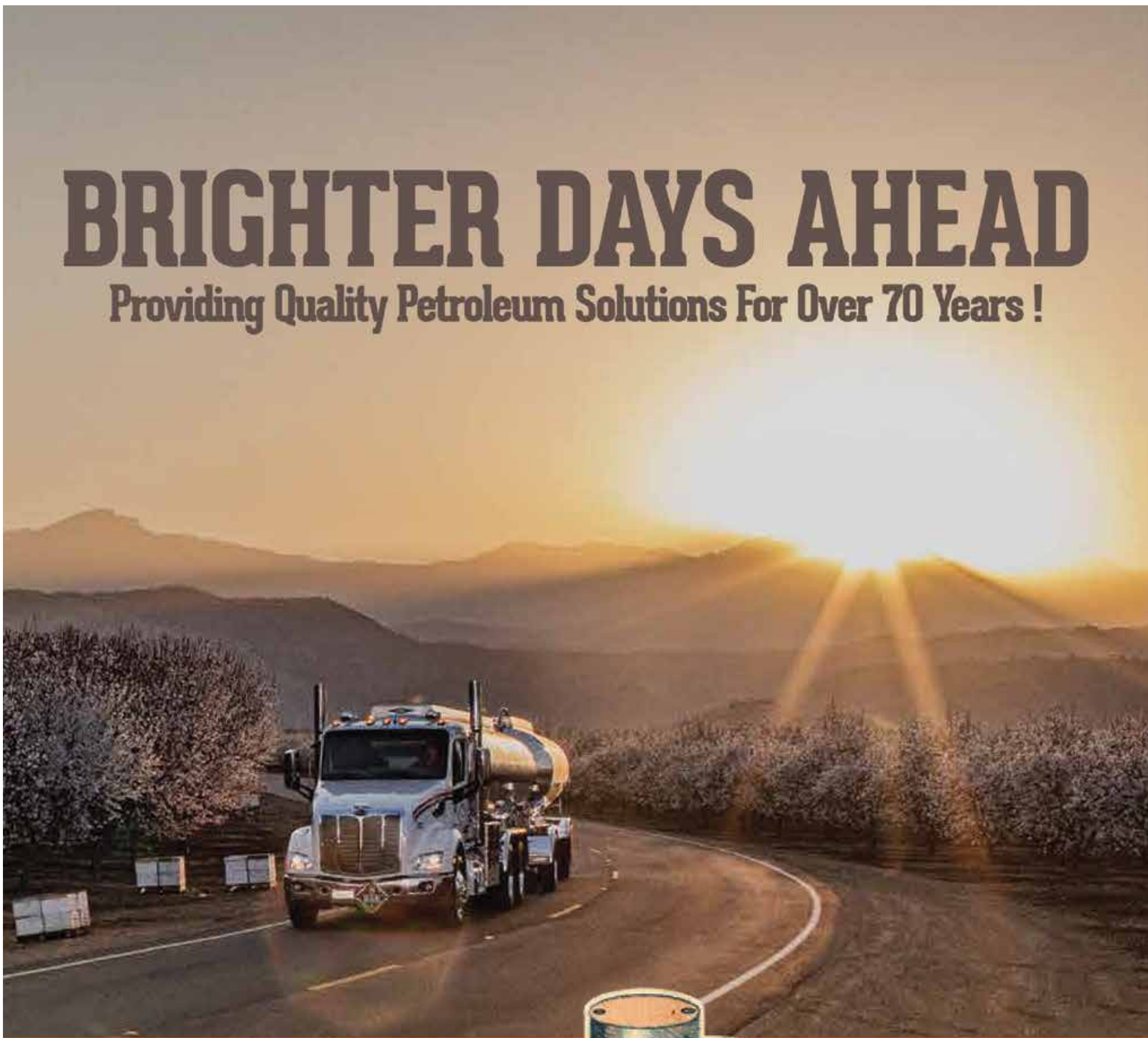
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Kings County Rural Crime Report

High copper wire prices lead to major increase in copper wire theft

Contributed by Rural Crime Supervisor Rod Shulman



The Kings County Rural Crime Unit has been extremely busy with multiple copper wire theft investigations each day. We have also been placing bait equipment out in the field to locate two suspects that have been stealing trailers and quads. The crew that is conducting these thefts are from the London area. These suspects took our bait trailer and quad to an address in London. They figured out the equipment had tracking equipment on the quad after ditching the trailer in a ponding basin. Unit members went to the last location and located our stolen quad, another quad stolen from our county and four others from Tulare County. Unfortunately, the suspects were not there. They have since moved because we went there every day in an attempt to make an arrest. To this day, we are still looking for these suspects.

With copper wire prices at a high we haven't seen in over 10 years, theft has increased like we have never seen. Our unit has taken over 30 wire theft reports over the past month. This doesn't include the investigations our patrol units have taken. The suspects in these investigations have caused hundreds of thousands of dollars of damage. We do have a suspect identified and know what he is driving. The reason we have not taken this suspect into custody is due to his transient state. He is wanted in Tulare, Kern, Fresno and Kings counties. Our unit arrested him two years ago and he is out of prison already and stealing wire everyday. He is a white male driving a black Chevy Tahoe. He will be with his juvenile son who is also assisting in these thefts. If any of you see a black Chevy Tahoe in or around your ranches or wells, call 911 immediately, then call one of our detectives so we can respond as well. We are working hard trying to take this guy into custody. He is mobile and lives in his car and low-end motels.

Please do not post any information on social media regarding this suspect. If you do post, please send only to accounts that are not public. I ask this because a past investigation was compromised because pictures I sent were posted on Facebook. The suspect found out we were looking for him and fled to another state. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Task Force Supervisor
Rod Shulman
 559-469-4004

Detective Kody Holt
 559-362-8928

Detective Colten Verhoeven
 559-469-6146

Detective Grace Thomas
 559-530-1701

If you see anything suspicious, please give any of our detectives a call. Also, remember the owner applied number (OAN) and SmartWater CSI tools that are available to you. If either one of these identifiers were on some of the equipment we recovered recently, it would have made it much easier to identify the owners. If you need an OAN, give any of our detectives a call. If you want more information about SmartWater CSI, give Dusty a call at the Kings County Farm Bureau office. Thanks again for your continued support! 🙌

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Kings County Farm Bureau accepting applications for three scholarships



1 Kings County Farm Bureau Scholarship

Kings County Farm Bureau offers scholarships to students based upon academic achievement, extracurricular activities, determination, leadership skills, and a commitment to a career in agriculture. This year, the committee will use discretion on the number and amount of awards to be distributed. In addition, scholarship recipients will receive a complimentary one-year collegiate membership in the Kings County Farm Bureau.

Who is eligible?

Students must be entering a two-year or four-year accredited college or university, or vocational education institute with the intent to pursue a career in the agricultural industry. Students must be a resident of Kings County or attend a Kings County high school.

Requirements & Recommendations:

- Official high school transcript (MUST be attached to submitted application)
- MUST have 2.5 minimum G.P.A. at the time of application submission
- Two letters of recommendation (MUST be attached to submitted application. Cannot be from applicant's relative)
- MUST be pursuing a career in the agricultural industry
- It is recommended that applicant demonstrate a history of service to Kings County agriculture or the Kings County Farm Bureau through some form of volunteerism or community service project
- It is recommended that applicant's parent, employer or relative be a Kings County Farm Bureau member

2 Environmental Oversight Committee Scholarship

The Environmental Oversight Committee Scholarship is sponsored by Kings County Farm Bureau and Kings County Citizens for a Healthy Environment, originally funded by G.W.F Power Systems. The scholarship amount is a maximum of \$4,000 per year based upon interest earned by the EOC Trust Fund for a maximum of four years per recipient (\$16,000 total).

Requirements & Criteria

- Must be a U.S. citizen and a graduate of a Kings County high school
- Must have a minimum grade point average (G.P.A.) of 3.0 for the last three years of high school for an entering college freshman. Must have a minimum of 3.0 G.P.A. from previous semester for college sophomore and upper-class scholarship renewal. If the recipient's G.P.A. is below 3.0 any semester, including and following the first semester of the sophomore school year, the recipient must appear before the Scholarship Committee for scholarship renewal review.
- Must attend an accredited four-year college, university, or community college in the United States of America as a full-time student carrying a minimum of 12 units
- Must major in Environmental Science, Physical Science, Life Science, Engineering, or Agricultural Sciences
- Must submit a completed Scholarship Application to the Scholarship Committee by deadline established by the Kings County Farm Bureau
- Must submit a handwritten statement, limited to 300 words stating the applicant's educational purpose and a summary of qualifications
- Must submit a completed Financial Application
- Must submit five letters of recommendation. Two must be from an instructor or teacher at the applicant's high school, one from a counselor at the applicant's high school, and two from adult individuals who have known the applicant for at least three years.
- Must agree to an oral interview

3 Victoria A. Mueller Memorial Scholarship

KCFB is managing a new scholarship this year in honor of Victoria Alise Mueller, daughter of Paula Vinzant, our director of government and member relations. Victoria, who went by Tori, left this world too soon in November 2020 at the age of 23, soon after graduating from college.

Tori spent her childhood years modeling, acting and competing in pageants. She was a world-class equestrian and a brilliant student. She was an honor student at CSU Long Beach, where she earned a degree in biology. At the time of her death, she was interviewing at pharmacy schools, and was accepted at all eight.



Victoria Alise Mueller

This scholarship was established by Tori's family and friends to honor her memory and legacy. She loved paying it forward, helping those around her, and was a friend to all. Her legacy lives on through her organ, tissue and eye donation, made through the One Legacy organization.

The Victoria A. Mueller Memorial Scholarship is offered to students based upon academic achievement, extracurricular activities, determination, leadership skills, and a commitment to a career in agricultural science. This year, the committee will use discretion on the number and amount of awards to be distributed.

Who is eligible?

Students must be entering or currently enrolled in a two- or four-year accredited college or university with the intent to pursue a career in the agricultural industry. Students must be a resident of Kings County or attend a Kings County High School.

Requirements & Recommendations:

- Official high school transcript (MUST be attached to submitted application)
- MUST have 3.0 minimum G.P.A. at the time of application submission
- Two letters of recommendation (MUST be attached to submitted application. Cannot be from applicant's relative)
- MUST be pursuing a career in the agricultural industry
- It is recommended that applicant demonstrate a service to Kings County agriculture or the Kings County Farm Bureau through some form of volunteerism or community service project.

Donations to the Victoria A. Mueller Memorial Scholarship can be made at plantfoundation.org/victoria.

Scholarship Submission Information & Deadlines

Deadline: March 16, 2022

Applications for all three scholarships can be found on the KCFB website, kcfb.org. Completed applications must be received by 4 p.m. in the KCFB office or postmarked by March 16, 2022. Email applications sent to kcfb@kcfb.org will be accepted by the deadline date and time. Make sure that applications and all required documents (letters of recommendations, transcripts, etc.) are scanned and attached to email in PDF format.

Kings County Farm Bureau Office address: 870 Greenfield Ave., Hanford, CA 93230
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Search for 2022-23 Dairy Princess underway

The local dairy industry is now accepting applications from young women wishing to compete for the District 5 (formerly District 7) Dairy Princess crown.

The California Dairy Princess Program has been in effect for many years as part of the California Milk Advisory Board's (CMAB) advocacy efforts. This program provides an opportunity for young women to represent the dairy industry in their district and across the state.

Over the years, the program has built a favorable public image for milk and dairy products through Dairy Princess appearances at industry and agricultural functions, school groups, and with the media. It provides young female dairy leaders an opportunity to serve as ambassadors for the California dairy industry. The year-long commitment to the program provides valuable professional development and communication skills that will benefit participants for many years.

Contestants must meet the following requirements:

- 1) be at least a junior in high school during the current academic school year and not over the age of 21;
- 2) have resided on a dairy cattle farm at some time during her life, or be the daughter or granddaughter of a past or present dairy cattle farm owner; or
- 3) be the daughter or ward of a person presently employed full-time as an owner or employee of a dairy processing plant or distributor in California; or
- 4) be the daughter or ward of a person employed full-time on an operating dairy cattle-related industry, such

"Dairy Princess" continued on page 11



Current Dairy Princess Ericka Simas

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"Water Allocation" continued from page 1

January and February, and Reclamation's obligation to meet Delta water quality and outflow standards imposed by the State Water Resources Control Board, prevent Reclamation from making water available under the District's contract.

CVP said allocations are based on an estimate of water available for delivery to CVP water users and reflect current reservoir storages, precipitation and snowpack in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada.

The CVP's reservoirs have decreased by more than 26 percent compared to last year, and is facing a deficit of 1.2 million acre-feet. The Sierras, whose precipitation is crucial to the Valley's water supply, have only received 1.7 inches in January and February, breaking a record for the lowest rain ever recorded for those two months.

Allocations could change should March bring some precipitation before the rainy season officially ends, but Valley farmers are becoming all too familiar with the idea of planning for the worst.

Within the Westlands Water District, last year's drought conditions led to the fallowing of more than 200,000 acres, thousands of acres of food left unharvested and the loss of countless jobs. They issued a statement in which they stated the importance of investing in infrastructure to better manage the state's water resources, which includes increased capacity to capture water when it's available for transport and use in times of drought.

"California needs new storage, both surface and groundwater, and improved conveyance facilities. The state must also establish effective water policies that enable adaptive management of the system to maximize the beneficial uses of water throughout the state. Despite the current lack of precipitation, the District is focusing on comprehensive approaches to ensure a sustainable water future," said Wetlands Water District's press release. 🌱


"Dairy Princess" continued from page 10

as dairy financing, sales or service; veterinarian; milk, grain or hay truck driver; milk inspector; grain supplier; hay dealer; alfalfa and/or grain producer; or raise dairy replacement heifers; or 5) currently is or has been a member of 4-H or FFA program where she participates or has participated in dairy cattle related projects; i.e. raise and show dairy cattle and/or evaluate dairy products, owns or has owned her own dairy cattle.

The final determination of eligibility will be at the discretion of the CMAB.

The newly selected Dairy Princess and alternate will participate in a mandatory training held June 27-July 1, 2022, in which they receive professional development coaching.

Application forms may be accessed online at www.californiadairyprincess.com/ca-dairy-princesses. Questions regarding the application can be directed to Jackie Giacomazzi (jackiegiacomazzi@gmail.com or 559-816-0707 or 559-584-7433); or CMAB Princess Coordinator Anastasia Stuyt (a_stuyt@yahoo.com). 🌱



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