

# Tulare County Office of Education

*Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools*

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## **For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Robert Herman  
Public Information Officer  
(559) 733-6606 – office  
(559) 303-8568 – cell

**Tulare County Office of Education Announces:**

## **Results from 6<sup>th</sup> annual Gas Company Student Entrepreneur Challenge**

**Held Wednesday, March 7, 2012 • Visalia Convention Center**

On Wednesday, March 7, seven teams of young entrepreneurs from Tulare and Kings County high schools presented projects developed in response to The Gas Company Student Entrepreneur Challenge. The Challenge, an event sponsored by The Gas Company, is designed to encourage students to develop products, services or other economic growth ideas that can be applied in the San Joaquin Valley.

The teams represented the following schools: Golden West High School (Visalia), Porterville High School, El Diamante High School (Visalia), Harmony Magnet Academy (Strathmore), Lemoore High School, and Mt. Whitney High School (Visalia). New this year is a video presentation category sponsored by the Business & Entrepreneurship Center at the Kern Community College District.

During the luncheon portion of the event, the top three high school teams presented their business concepts to prominent Tulare County business, community and economic development leaders in attendance.

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## **Winners**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Harmony Magnet Academy (Strathmore) for their project, “BRC Ag Services,” (\$1,500 prize).
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Golden West High School (Visalia), for their project “Trailblazer Concepts,” (\$500 prize)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Porterville High School Academy of Business for their project “Sam’s Sweets” (\$300 prize)

## **Additional Honors**

The winners in the high school business plan category were: Lemoore High School (first), Golden West High School (second), and Mt. Whitney High School (third). The winners in the high school presentation category were: Harmony Magnet Academy (first), Golden West High School (second), and Porterville High School Academy of Business (third). The top prize in the community college presentation category went to Porterville College (\$750). The winner in the first annual video “Pitch It” elevator pitch category went to Meagan Blakely of Porterville College. The Pitch It competition was conceived by the Business & Entrepreneur Center with the Kern Community College District.

## **Scholarship Winner**

Victoria Prado of Harmony Magnet Academy received the annual STEM Entrepreneur Scholarship of \$1000, sponsored by TUCOEMAS Federal Credit Union. The scholarship was created to support students who exhibit an entrepreneurial spirit and plan to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM). Victoria is a senior who submitted an excellent essay on the potential of developing a business called “Ecoscape.” The business would market a home water reclamation system which would be used to irrigate lawns and gardens.

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The Student Entrepreneur Challenge was created from the vision and support of The Gas Company with coordination by the Tulare County Office of Education and local business partners.

For more information, please contact Robert Herman at (559) 733-6606.

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